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THE SILVER AGE OF
LATIN LITERATURE

THE SILVER AGE
OF
LATIN LITERATURE
FROM TIBERIUS TO TRAJAN

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THE SILVER AGE
IN
LATIN LITERATURE
FROM THE AGE OF CAESAR

WITH A HISTORY OF THE LITERATURE

First Published in 1900

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PREFACE

THE term 'Silver Latin' is often applied loosely to all the post-Augustan literature of Rome : in this book it has been reserved for that earlier part of it which, in spite of a definite decline in taste and freshness, deserves nevertheless to be sharply distinguished from the baser metals of the imitative or poverty-stricken periods which followed.

I hope that what I have written may be of service to professed students of Latin, and the notes are almost entirely devoted to their interests. It is, however, the general reader that I have had mainly in view, a fact which has made it necessary to English all illustrative extracts. I felt very strongly that renderings from poets must be themselves in verse : I could wish it had been otherwise. For many of the passages had never been translated into English verse, and, where they had been, the translations seemed almost invariably too free to serve my purpose, which was to give the reader a tolerably accurate conception of what the poet wrote, not, as for instance Dryden's was, to make the poet 'speak such English as he would have spoken if he had been born in England and in this present age.' I have had, therefore, in every case to attempt versions of my own, in which I have endeavoured to keep as

vi SILVER AGE OF LATIN LITERATURE

close to the original as seemed compatible with the composition of verse that should run with some ease and English that might be read with some pleasure. The result is, at best, something like an engraving of a richly-coloured painting : I only hope that the reader will be able to regard it with more indulgence than I can myself.

The paragraphs dealing with the influence of Silver writers upon later literature obviously make no claim to completeness, but perhaps the very meagreness of their outlines may encourage others to develop them.

I have lived for so long in constant intimacy with the authors of whom I have written that I find it difficult to estimate the extent to which my account of their work is coloured by what I have read in histories of literature and special articles. But I have no hesitation in confessing much indebtedness, in the one category, to the *Geschichte der römischen Litteratur* of Martin Schanz, in the other, to Mr. W. E. Heitland's well-known Introduction to Haskins' edition of Lucan. My friend Mr. C. J. Battersby was kind enough to go through my proofs : his frank and suggestive criticisms have enabled me to smooth away some of the roughness of my verses and remove many obscurities of expression.

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CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
PREFACE	v
CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE	ix
I. THE DECLAMATIONS AND THE POINTED STYLE	1
II. THE EPIC	18
III. DRAMA	55
IV. VERSE SATIRE	64
V. LIGHT AND MISCELLANEOUS VERSE.	85
VI. ORATORY	128
VII. HISTORY, BIOGRAPHY, AND MEMOIRS	137
VIII. PHILOSOPHY	195
IX. PROSE-SATIRE AND ROMANCE	217
X. CORRESPONDENCE	238
XI. GRAMMAR, CRITICISM, AND RHETORIC	252
XII. SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL PROSE	277
NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS	317
INDEX	319

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

B.C.

- [? 55. Birth of the elder Seneca.]
- [? 4. Birth of Seneca the philosopher.]

A.D.

14-37. Tiberius :

(During his rule and that of Claudius Palaemon flourishes : see 48. Towards the end of it Fenestella dies.)

- 14. Velleius elected praetor.
- 16. Germanicus' North Sea voyage (after which falls the poem of Pedo, p. 18).
- 19. Death of Germanicus, whose translation of Aratus presumes the death of Augustus.
- 23/24. Birth of the elder Pliny.
- 25. Prosecution and death of Cremutius Cordus.
- 30. Consulship of Vinicius : dedication of Velleius' book to him.
- 31. Fall of Seianus. Before this, but under Tiberius, Phaedrus' first two books published. Between it and the death of Tiberius, publication of the work of Valerius Maximus. Pomponius Secundus in disfavour from now until the accession of Caligula.
- 34. Death of MamerCUS Scaurus.
(Dec. 4) Birth of Persius.
- 35. Consulship of Seruilius Nonianus.

37-41. Caligula :

(During his rule the rhetorical work of the elder Seneca and probably Phaedrus' later books appear. The younger Seneca is successful at the bar. Aufidius Bassus had published at least part of his historical work when the elder Seneca wrote.)

- 38. Death of Graecinus (conjectural, but at any rate under Caligula). Before this, but after the death of Augustus, Celsus had published at least his agricultural treatise.
- 39. Consulship of Domitius Afer.
(Nov. 3) Birth of Lucan.
- c. 40. Births of Martial and Quintilian.
- 41. (Jan. 24) Assassination of Caligula, by the time of which Cluius Rufus had held the consulate.

x SILVER AGE OF LATIN LITERATURE

A.D.

41-54. Claudius :

(During his rule Seruilius Nonianus was giving readings and Curtius wrote his History.)

41. Banishment of Seneca. The elder Seneca now dead.
42. Mauretanian campaign of Suetonius Paulinus.
- 43-48. Scribonius Largus' work written.
44. British triumph of Claudius, shortly before which Mela completes his work.
47. Pomponius Secundus mobbed in the theatre.
48. Jerome's *floruit* for Palaemon.
Speech of Claudius in the senate (see p. 176).
49. Marriage of Claudius and Agrippina : Seneca's recall.
50. Victory of Pomponius Secundus over the Chatti.
52. Gallio, Seneca's brother, governor of Achaia.
54. Appearance of comet to which Calpurnius alludes.

54-68. Nero :

(To Nero was dedicated the metrical treatise of Caesius Bassus. Under him, and probably early in the reign, the Einsiedeln poems and Seneca's satire on Claudius were composed; before his death, the Iliad translation).

- 54-57. Asconius' Cicero commentary composed.
56. Seneca's *De Clementia* published.
57. Amphitheatre built in the Campus Martius. To the opening exhibitions refers the seventh eclogue of Calpurnius.
58. Latest date probable for the birth of Tacitus.
59. Deaths of Agrippina, Domitius Afer, and Seruilius Nonianus.
60. Institution by Nero of quinquennial contests. Lucan's panegyric of the emperor delivered.
- 61/62. Birth of the younger Pliny.
62. Death of Burrus. Virtual retirement of Seneca.
(Nov. 24) Death of Persius.
63. Earthquake in Campania (mentioned in the *Naturales Quaestiones* of Seneca).
64. Martial's arrival in Rome.
Vatinius' power at court. Curiatius Maternus begins to write tragedy.
- c. 65. Columella writing.
Fire at Lyons (mentioned in Seneca's ninety-first letter).
65. Conspiracy of Piso : deaths of Piso, Seneca, and (Apr. 30) Lucan.
66. Death of Petronius.
67. Death of Corbulo.
68. Consulates of Silius Italicus and Galerius Trachalus.

A.D.

68/69. **Galba, Otho, Vitellius :**

(*After Nero's death were written the 'Octavia' and, presumably, the historical work of Fabius Rusticus.*)

68. Quintilian brought to Rome by Galba. (?) Opening of his school.

69-79. **Vespasian :**

(*Valerius Flaccus dedicated his poem to Vespasian.*)

70. Aquilius Regulus attacked as a *delator* in the senate.

72. Third consulship of Mucianus (who was dead when *Nat. Hist.* 32. 62 was written).

77. Sixth consulship of Titus : dedication to him of Pliny's *Natural History*.

77/78. Dramatic date of *Dialogus* (see p. 260). Curvatus Maternus has just given a reading of his *Cato* ; Vibius Crispus, after having for a long time enjoyed power as a pleader, is influential with Vespasian ; Julius Secundus and Marcus Aper are the leading counsel of the day.

78. Tacitus' marriage to Agricola's daughter.

79-81. **Titus :**

(Aug. 24) Eruption of Vesuvius. (?) Death of Caesius Bassus (p. 96¹).

(Aug. 25) Death of the elder Pliny.

[The death of Statius' father and the publication of Pliny's continuation of the history of Aufidius Bassus are subsequent to these events.]

79/80. Statius begins his *Thebais* (see 91, 92).

80. Opening of the Colosseum : Martial's book on the games composed.

81-96. **Domitian :**

83/84. Defeat of the Chatti ; assumption by Domitian of the title *Germanicus*.

c. 84. Frontinus' *Strategemata*, Martial's *Xenia* and *Apophoreta* composed.

85/86. Publication of the first book of Martial's epigrams.

86. Institution of the Capitoline contests by Domitian.

87/88. ? *Floruit* of Probus (see *Mart.* 3. 2. 12).

88. Praetorship of Tacitus. Retirement of Quintilian.

91/92. *Thebais* completed by Statius (after twelve years' work).

92. The first book of Statius' *Silvae* published.

? Publication of Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* (which presumes the deaths of Valerius Flaccus, Saleius Bassus, Serranus, Trachalus, Vibius Crispus, and Julius Secundus).

Part of Silius' *Punica* probably published by now (see p. 28).

xii SILVER AGE OF LATIN LITERATURE

A.D.

93. Death of Agricola.

95. The fourth book of Statius' *Silvae* published and the *Achilleis* begun : the poet in Naples.

96/97. Pliny's letters begin.

96-98. **Nerva :**

96. Publication of the eleventh book of Martial's epigrams.

97. Consulship of Tacitus. Death of Verginius Rufus (see p. 133). Julius Frontinus *curator* of the aqueducts.

98-117. **Trajan :**

98. Second consulship of Trajan. Publication of the *Agricola* and *Germania* of Tacitus.

This year, or later, if it is the work of Tacitus, must have appeared the *Dialogus*.

Martial's return to Spain.

100. Prosecution of Marius by Tacitus and Pliny.

Consulship of Pliny, who delivers his panegyric (apparently in the latter half of the year).

101/102. Death of Silius Italicus.

102. Publication of the twelfth book of Martial's epigrams.

c. 104. Deaths of Martial and Frontinus.

c. 106. First hints that Tacitus is at work upon the *Historiae* (see p. 164).

? Death of Aquilius Regulus (see p. 132).

c. 111. Pliny governor in Bithynia.

114. Trajan's assumption of the title *optimus*. Pliny probably dead by now (see p. 239).

115. Appearance of comet to which Juvenal refers in his sixth satire.

116. Extension of Roman boundary to the Persian Gulf earliest year possible for the death of Tacitus.

[128. Juvenal still writing (see p. 76).]

THE SILVER AGE OF LATIN LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

THE DECLAMATIONS AND THE POINTED STYLE

THE brilliant period of Latin literature to which the term *Augustan* is commonly applied had, as a matter of fact, come to an end long before the death of Rome's first emperor in A.D. 14. By the beginning of the Christian era Virgil, Horace, Propertius, and Tibullus had been dead for years, Livy was nearly sixty, and, if still writing, engaged only upon the completion of a work the conception of which dated at least twenty years earlier. The fact that Ovid had still to produce the most masterly of his compositions is but one of several that might justify us in placing him not merely on the border line of a new era, but definitely across it.

Joy at the return of peace after nearly a century of civil strife, pride in the might of an empire, the full majesty of which men failed to realise until its administration passed into the hands of a single individual—that these emotions inspired the best work of the Augustans is a commonplace of literary history. But man, alas, soon learns to take the blessings of peace for granted, and the spirit of imperialism easily de-

generates into that of literature's deadliest foe, materialism. It was fortunate that at the moment when the flowers of this delicate Italian growth began to show signs of languishing, a genial soil for its seeds presented itself in the provinces, destined henceforward to give to Rome's letters that assistance which they had hitherto rendered only to her legions. But the seeds themselves were by no means vigorous or healthy. Long before the chilling frosts of disillusionment and complacency had withered the plant, nay, in the very season when it had seemed at its proudest and strongest, experienced eyes had observed processes at work upon it which must inevitably distort its growth and would in the end very possibly extinguish its life.

From the outset, almost, Roman literature manifested the tendency to appeal only to the cultivated few. Horace's contempt for the 'uninitiate throng'¹ is but the open confession of the creed that is hinted by Terence's prologues, one hundred years before. Such a tendency need not necessarily be fatal to the production of great literature, but it is fatally apt to encourage that conception of literature which holds a work good or bad according as it conforms to certain rules, and assumes that he who knows those rules may safely write. This second canon is in itself the more dangerous of the two, and was bound to have serious consequences in imperial Rome, where men of ambition who found the main outlet of their energies suddenly closed by the almost total extinction of political life naturally fell back upon the once subsidiary channels of literary fame. 'Under the old régime,' says Horace,² 'my countrymen affected

¹ *Od.* 3. 1. 1.

² *Ep.* 2. 1. 103 *sqq.*

practical occupations, like those of the money-lender and lawyer :

Such once Rome's taste, that now is fickle grown
And with the lust for writing burns alone.
No boy, no senior staid, but as he dines
Must wreathe his brows in bay, and spout his lines.'

The remark may belong to as late a date as the year 13 B.C., but dilettantism was clearly rampant thirty years earlier, when the poet published the *Satires*, in one of which¹ he finds it necessary to explain, obviously as a departure from the custom of the age, his reluctance to give public readings of his works.

For the public reading, introduced at Rome by the disappointed statesman and patron of Virgil, Asinius Pollio,² drew its very life-breath from dilettantism. The writings of Martial and the younger Pliny show that by their time the necessity of attending the 'recitation' had become a burden upon society hardly less insufferable than that of the formal morning call. Things had not, probably, gone so far during the reign of Augustus, but the founder of the institution must, before he died, have realised that his experiment had failed completely. Himself the most merciless of critics, Pollio had doubtless contemplated little more than a development of that which had been common enough long before his time, the reading by a writer of some piece of work that had not yet reached its final form before one or two brother authors or men of acknowledged taste, for the purpose of eliciting comment and obtaining advice upon points of doubt or difficulty. Such, at any rate, is the theory of its functions still maintained under Domitian by its

¹ I. 4. 22 *cum mea nemo | scripta legat, uolgo recitare timentis.*

² Sen. *Contr.* 4 *præf.* 2.

warmest advocate, the younger Pliny.¹ It is possible that this primitive form of *recitatio* did much for Roman letters, that many a fine passage in Propertius or Horace was inspired by the hints of an Ovid or a Varus.² But even in such limited gatherings we may be sure that the situation sometimes grew strained, friendship beginning to totter as criticism grew strong. In the formal functions of the empire it must very soon have become impossible to make a frank avowal of one's judgment. Men did not hire a hall and furnish it comfortably, or borrow a reception-room from a patron³ (who regarded the favour as full quittance for the faithful services rendered him by the literary aspirant in the past), issue invitations of which those who had not the moral courage to refuse them must be continually reminded,⁴ and finally on the great day itself appear, raised aloft on a rostrum and dressed in their best clothes,⁵ before an audience that might easily include the emperor,⁶—simply to have holes picked in their latest compositions. On the contrary, if the reading was not freely punctuated with expressions of strong approval (borrowed generally, of course, from the language of a nation whose superior culture had 'taken captive its rude conqueror'⁷), if the whole assemblage did not at times rise to its

¹ See e.g. *Ep.* 5. 3. 8 *has recitandi causas sequor, primum quod ipse qui recitat aliquanto acrius scriptis suis auditorum reuerentia intendit, deinde quod de quibus dubitat quasi ex consilii sententia statuit.*

² *Ov. Trist.* 4. 10. 45 *saepe suos solitus recitare Propertius ignes*, *Hor. A. P.* 438 *Quintilio si quid recitares, 'corrige, sodes, | hoc' aiebat 'et hoc.'*

³ *Tac. Dial.* 9, *Juv.* 7. 39 *sqq.*

⁴ *Plin. Ep.* 1. 13. 4.

⁵ *Pers.* 1. 15 *haec populo pexusque togaque recenti | . . . sede leges celsa.*

⁶ See for Augustus *Suet. Aug.* 89, for Claudius *Plin. Ep.* 1. 13. 3, for Nero the *Vita Lucani*.

⁷ E.g. *sophos* (σοφῶς), *euge* !

feet and pay silent tribute, the performance ranked as a failure—*frigus*,¹ or *chill*, as one may fairly render it, and what else could one expect if the cool breath of dispassionate criticism once got circulating in these stuffy *salons*? Such incidents were rare. Most of the members of an audience, themselves looking forward to the day when it would be their turn to occupy the platform, would be quite willing to exhibit as judges to-day the clemency they might need as performers to-morrow. Barring accidents—for these highly-strung amateurs had, in matters non-literary, an acute sense of the ridiculous, and the collapse of a row of chairs or a facetious interruption from the body of the hall might easily render them incapable of giving you any further attention²—but barring such accidents, if you abstained from any attempt to mould taste and followed implicitly the rule that directs that those who please to write must write to please, you could count on decent treatment. These were the circles, no doubt, in which arose the tradition that the chief poets of the Augustan age were Virgil—and *Rabirius*,³ and a tendency to elaborate passages lending themselves to effective reading which probably had much to do with the readiness to sacrifice the whole to the part that is so prominent a feature in Silver writing.⁴

But fashions quickly pass, and the dangers with which literature is threatened by its own popularity do not always have time to materialize. What made the outlook really hopeless was the state of education. The Republic had known but one form of it, to wit,

¹ Plin. *Ep.* 6. 15. 4.

² See the anecdotes related on pp. 152 and 246.

³ See p. 145.

⁴ See pp. 30, 35, 81, 144.

that which had for aim the production of the public speaker. And now, when the enthusiasm for literature and culture called aloud for a broadening of the educational system, new merits were discovered in the old, familiar method. 'From the study of eloquence,' says the older Seneca, to whose work on the declamations we owe a great debt, 'from the study of eloquence one easily strikes off into any of the others. She gives weapons even to those who never intend to serve in her ranks.'¹ The words must have sounded like a commonplace to his contemporaries: no one seems to have protested that when the needs of the many are forced into a framework originally intended to satisfy those of the few, that framework, or at least part of it, will probably be damaged. In rhetoric, it was the exercise, or declamation, that gave way. Where so many students had no intention of proceeding to the bar, its original purpose was easily forgotten, and it became little more than a vehicle for the display of wit and ingenuity, the *tour de force* or brilliant handling of some philosophic or psychological point gaining far higher marks than any effective plea, or the careful weaving of a chain of evidence. With the change in the view point came naturally a change in the character of the themes, which were no longer necessarily drawn from the pages of history or the records of the law,² and sometimes became almost as imaginative as the argument of an epic or a tragedy. Great store was set

¹ *Contr.* 2 pr. 3 *facilis ab hac in omnes artes discursus est: instruit etiam quos non sibi exercet.*

² Suet. *De Rhet.* 1 hints at the change: *ueteres controversiae aut ex historiis trahebantur aut ex ueritate ac re, si qua forte recens accidisset.* Comparison of the themes he mentions with those of the elder Seneca's book or Quintilian's *Institutio* (see especially the at first sight similar one of *Inst. Or.* 7. 3. 31) is very instructive.

on the invention of nice cases and difficult dilemmas. A vestal virgin, convicted of breach of vows and flung down a precipice, escapes without injury: is she to undergo the ordeal afresh? ¹ A man having three sons—an orator, a philosopher, and a doctor—leaves his money to the one who has done his fellow-creatures most good.² Romance even makes its appearance in these primarily legal regions: the mediaeval *Gesta Romanorum* found several novels in Seneca's book.³ A man is captured by pirates, but freed by the chief's daughter. Arriving home with her as his bride, he is disinherited by his father.⁴ Or, a loving couple vow not to survive each other. The husband, going abroad, takes occasion to send his wife false news of his own death: she flings herself over a precipice. On her recovering, and learning the truth, her father requires her to divorce so inconsiderate a partner.⁵ The law of these cases is often such as never stood in Roman statute books, sometimes such as no code known to antiquity contained—law that grants actions for ingratitude and insanity, and recognises the use of dreams as evidence and figures of speech as arguments. Thus, when inviting an opponent to swear the truth of his statements by a particularly solemn oath, you might say 'Let him swear by his father's ashes—*which he has never buried*, by his father's memory—*on which he has brought dishonour*,' and so on, making the whole thing into a row of pegs on which to suspend various misdeeds of which you wished to imply him guilty. A famous professor was rash enough to use the figure in a real case in which he had

¹ Sen. *Contr.* 1. 3.

² Quint. *Decl. Min.* 268.

³ Cp. for instance Sen. 1. 1 with *Gesta* 2, 1. 3 with *Gesta* 3, and see Friedlaender, *Sittengeschichte Roms* (E.T. iv. p. 297).

⁴ Sen. *Contr.* 1. 6.

⁵ Sen. *Contr.* 2. 2.

become involved, and was quite taken aback when the practical man on the other side promptly declared that his client was ready to take such an oath. 'Not at all,' he replied: 'this isn't a real offer: it's a figure of speech!' Then, finding that the jury, who wanted to get away, was with his opponent, he began to lament that this would be the death of the figures: the barrister expressed a belief that life would still be possible without them, and won his case.¹ Another of these teachers, standing trial on a serious charge, was found on the evening of the first day lost in admiration for the eloquence of his prosecutor, and had to be reminded that the latter would not come down next day (as he would at school) to argue the other side with equal force.² It was indeed in an enchanted garden they and their pupils lived, rearing and tending choice flowers that the first touch of common sense must send fluttering to the ground. So absolutely had the original conception of the declamations as exercises for the learner disappeared that orators of standing and men who had held high office regularly gave public exhibitions of their skill in composing them.³ Some of those from which Seneca quotes were delivered in the presence of various noblemen, and even the Emperor himself.⁴ There was really no difference between a performance of this kind and a *recitatio*, though, curiously enough, Pollio, the

¹ Sen. *Contr.* 7. pr. 6 sqq.: *clamabat Albucius 'non detuli conditionem: schema dixi.'* Arruntius instabat. . . . Albucius clamabat '*ista ratione schemata de rerum natura tolluntur.*' Arruntius aiebat '*tollantur: poterimus sine illis uiuere.*'

² Sen. *Contr.* 7. 5. 12.

³ This is sufficiently established by the '*Oratorum et Rhetorum*' on the title-page of Seneca's book (p. 257): cp. 1. 2. 22 where a *uir praetorius* declaims a *controuersia*.

⁴ *Contr.* 2. 4. 12, 10 pr. 3, *Suas.* 2. 21.

inventor of the latter, never consented to declaim before a large audience.¹ It seems, indeed, as if the schools themselves gradually came to be looked upon as mere declamation *salons* : at least it is difficult, on any other hypothesis, to understand how, for instance, when a certain professor was developing for his pupils a thought closely akin to that of the proverbial 'I will be Caesar, or nothing,' declaring that if he were a gladiator he would be Fusius, if a ballet-dancer Bathyllus, if a race-horse Melissus (the names selected being of course those of the popular favourite in each case), it can have been possible for a scoffer like Cassius Severus, the most mordant wit of the day, to be present and interpolate the remark, 'And I suppose, if you were a drain-pipe, 'tis a main drain you would be.' ²

The only complete specimens of the declamation that have reached us almost certainly belong to a later period than ours.³ Seneca gives us, apart from a few hints on treatment, only the 'best things' that he can remember as having been uttered by various declaimers. The fact is very characteristic, for the pointed sentence, packed tight with all kinds of irony and allusion, often intelligible only to one who had grasped every detail of the case, was the essence of the thing. It is not easy to give the general reader a clear and just impression of these sentences. Even the expert Latinist, coming to them for the first time, finds that it takes time to learn to breathe such an atmosphere, and translation, which dulls the brilliance of the epigram, is deadly to the mere *conceit*

¹ Sen. *Contr.* 4 pr. 2.

² Sen. *Contr.* 3 pr. 16 *si cloaca esses, maxima esses.*

³ See p. 275.

which is so often all the declaimer manages to attain. I feel bound however to make the attempt, and trust that the reader on his side will bear in mind that the dividing line between passion and extravagance, force and bombast, is not a thing upon which Southern and Northern Europe are even to-day in complete agreement.

The reader will remember some of the themes mentioned a few paragraphs back. The Vestal's foes argue that what has befallen her, so far from representing the reversal by the gods of a human verdict, is really part of her punishment: 'I hope she will be picked up alive when she's thrown down the second time.'¹ The youth who has married a pirate's daughter cannot help reflecting that whereas in most cases fathers blame their sons for not settling down and taking a wife, *he* is being punished for not deserting one.² And he suddenly remembers, 'when I took the oath to marry her, *'twas by this father of mine I swore!*'³ On the other side prosecutor strikes an attitude of alarm. 'Hearken to the uproar! See, son—plunder and pillage everywhere, country-houses in flames, shepherds and ploughmen in flight! But there, *'tis but your father-in-law come to pay you a call!*'⁴ In the declamation of the 'Mutual Oath' the husband says to his father-in-law, 'You think the oath was unreasonable: lovers *are* unreasonable, and *only old dotards can unite love and discretion.*'⁵ And again, 'She threatens to kill herself if her father

¹ *Contr.* 1. 3. 1 *quid tibi . . . preceper nisi ut ne bis quidem deiecta pereas?*

² *L.C.* 1. 6. 7.

³ *L.C.* § 2 *promisi nuptias, et quasi aliquam sacram testationem tuum nomen inserui: cp. § 10.*

⁴ *L.C.* § 12.

⁵ *Contr.* 2. 2. 10 *senes sic amanti.*

disowns her. He doesn't believe her. *Nor did her husband.*¹

So far I have quoted only passages that Seneca gives either without comment or even with approval. Some are too much for him. When a student working on the line that Heaven had simply wished to prolong the Vestal's agony said, 'The gods heard our prayers *and recalled her*,' his professor interpolated, 'What, like a chariot that has made a false start at the races?' and went on to indulge in personalities that shocked the class.² It was a professor himself who suggested that from the time the condemned woman had erred, she had practised the art of falling down precipices.³ In another declamation, where a son charges his father not merely with refusing to ransom him from pirates but with writing to promise them twice the amount demanded if they cut off both his hands, some one made defendant plead 'It was all a mistake: *I dictated if you cut not off both his hands*, and the clerk accidentally omitted the negative.'⁴ Again, a woman who has been convicted of poisoning her stepson spitefully names as her accomplice his sister. Cestius, wishing to bring out the fact that the girl was a mere child, introduced a dialogue in which her mother said, 'Take this poison and give it to your brother,' and she replied, 'Poison, mother? *What is that?*'⁵ Triarius improved upon this by making her say, 'Can't

¹ L.c. § 1 *hoc illi pater non credit : nec uir credidit.*

² The boy was son to the Varus who let himself be surprised by Arminius in the Teutoburgian forests, and the professor wound up with the taunt '*ista neglegentia pater tuus exercitum perdidit*' (Contr. I. 3. 10).

³ L.c. § 11 *fortasse poenae se praeparauit et ex quo peccare coepit cadere condidit.*

⁴ Contr. I. 7. 18 *ego dictavi 'duplam dabo si manus non praecideritis,' librario una syllaba excidit 'non.'*

⁵ Contr. 9. 6. 10.

I have some ? ' ¹ This instance is a very characteristic one : many turns that offend us in the declamations are due to the same combination of the desire to rival a successful coup with complete lack of the sense of humour.

The conventional censure of Silver literature as *rhetorical* understates the case against it. The most thorough-going enemy of rhetoric must admit a vast difference between the rhetoric of Euripidean drama and that of Seneca's. It is in the fact that it is infected with the faults of this particular kind of rhetorical exercise that the weakness of first-century Latin mainly lies.

For the love of epigram, antithesis, paradox, and allusion—all that for lack of a better name is in this book called *point*—the declamations were not of course solely responsible. The age of Pope affords evidence enough to prove that such a tendency can arise spontaneously enough at a time when letters become fashionable, and elegance and wit usurp the place of vigour and inspiration. Roman literature, as we shall see in a moment, was particularly likely to develop it. But the pointed flowers of the declamation are something more than a mere escape from the large garden of contemporary taste : they are the principal objects of its cultivation. It seems indeed almost as if these tricks of language and thought might be, so to speak, lineal descendants of those quibbles and subtleties upon which the old, genuinely legal exercises were based. Be that as it may, we have definite proof of the influence which a school point could exercise upon *alumni* in their years of maturity. Seneca, for instance, mentions that Ovid borrowed

¹ L.c. § 11 *mater, et mihi ña.*

from his master Latro the suggestion that his Ajax makes in regard to the arms of Achilles for which he and Ulysses are candidates :

Fling them amidst the foe, and bid us thence
Retrieve them !¹

For a careful reader of the declamations, indeed, the literature of our period is full of such echoes. Some points had quite a vogue in this way. The thought, for instance, that the misfortunes of those we love endear them the more to us, found more than once in declamations, recurs in Seneca's plays, one of his letters, Lucan and Statius.² Suetonius makes Tiberius meet a convict's prayer for immediate execution with the reply, 'I have not yet forgiven you!' a mere variation of a turn 'death is a boon for one who has fallen into the hands of a victorious foe' which meets us in the declamations, Seneca's plays, Lucan, Statius, Silius, Martial, and perhaps Tacitus.³

Classes in the schools were large,⁴ and when thirty students had worked their will upon a theme, the positions of those whose turn was yet to come cannot have been enviable. There was a tendency in such cases to content oneself with giving a new dress to a point already made by a predecessor. A glance at Seneca's book will prove that mere variation of this kind was accounted a merit, and this point of view has left plain marks on the literature. Ovid's weakness in this direction is notorious, but there are several others in our period who find it impossible to resist

¹ *Contr.* 2. 2. 8.

² Cp. Quint. *Decl. Min.* 328 (p. 291 R.) with Sen. *Phoen.* 386, *Ep.* 66. 27, Luc. 8. 76, Stat. *Theb.* 3. 705.

³ Suet. *Tib.* 61 : cp. Sen. *Contr.* 7. 1. 25, *Thy.* 246 sqq., Med. 1018, Luc. 2. 511, Stat. *Theb.* 11. 717, Sil. 7. 71, Mart 3. 21 (*Tac. Hist.* 3. 66).

⁴ Juv. 7. 151 *classis numerosa*.

the temptation to touch up anew some thought of which they are particularly enamoured. The reader will find a shocking example at the opening of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, pilloried by Fronto in an amusing letter to his imperial pupil,¹ to which his editor appends the comment 'as if Fronto could complain of such behaviour!'—so great the gulf that may open between preaching and practice! In other cases the knowledge that the cream of the declamation had already been skimmed led to the introduction of strained and bombastic ideas. My quotations from Seneca's declamation extracts have supplied the reader with some glaring instances of this fault, against which Quintilian often warns his readers. It abounds in the literature of our period, which indeed owes to this drawback more than any other the neglect from which it suffers to-day. Tacitus himself cannot be wholly acquitted of it.

It is possible that the well-known Silver tendency of prose style to encroach upon that of poetry came from the same source. Even Quintilian regards themes of an imaginative, almost poetic, character as admissible if certain necessary safeguards are observed;² Seneca quotes passages which are mere prose paraphrases of Virgil,³ and the famous declamation of 'the Poor Man's Bees'⁴ makes much use of the fourth Georgic. When we find Quintilian complaining that declaimers

¹ *Ad M. Ant. de Orat.*, p. 157 N.

² Quint 2. 10. 5 *quid ergo? numquam haec supra fidem et poetica, ut uere dixerim, themata inuenibus tractare permittamus, ut exspatiantur et gaudeant materia et quasi in corpus eant?* (6) *erit optimum; sed certe sint grandia et tumida, non stulta etiam et acrioribus oculis intuenti ridicula.*

³ *Contr.* 7. 1. 27 *nox erat, et omnia canentia sub sideribus mutarent* (= *Aen.* 8. 26 sqq.); cp. *Suas.* 3. 4 and *Georg.* 1. 427 sqq.

⁴ See p. 276.

think only of the passage they are declaiming, not the whole case,¹ and remember too the professor who gave away his case for the sake of one figure of speech, we think of the similes which Statius elaborates into short idylls—though here, as already hinted, the readings may have been mainly responsible. Enough has, I trust, been said to establish the importance of the question of environment in regard to the writers of our period, to satisfy the reader that no criticism of their work can be fair and adequate which contents itself with an examination into intrinsic merits and leaves unappreciated the vigour and independence which men needed to enable them, in spite of the temptations of an education that was little else than the plaything of thoughtless and self-satisfied fashion, to leave behind them writings that were full of human interest, practical wisdom, suggestiveness, and inspiration for posterity—a solid contribution to the literature that is for all time.

In this connexion it may be well to remind the reader that the style which I call *pointed* was, after all, one obviously adapted to the Roman temperament, the Roman language. It was not of course the peculiar product of Italian soil. Traces of such a style are discernible in more than one branch of later Greek literature. One can hardly conceive a more apposite adjective for it than the *argutus* with which Cicero has labelled one of the Asian styles of oratory,² which he further describes as characterized by the predominance of thoughts neat and attractive rather

¹ Quint. 5. 13. 31 *ut ducti occasione dicendi non respiciant quid dixerint, dum locum praesentem, non totam causam, intuentur.*

² Brut. 325 *genera Asiaticae dictionis duo sunt: unum sententiosum et argutum, sententiis non tam grauibus et seueris quam concinnis et uenustis.* He names one Meneclis as an exponent of this style.

than deep or dignified, obviously using his epithet in much the same sense as I use mine. Outside oratory, he goes on to observe, the same tendency was represented by the historian Timaeus: we know from other testimony that this writer was devoted to the 'routing out of some new conceit.'¹ The Romans, with their acuteness of mind, their instinct for assonance, their language so adapted for the development of terse, clean-cut sentences, were likely to make the most of any hints they found in their Greek models. The fragments of a typical Roman like Cato show that Cicero was fully justified in claiming for him the title *argutus*.² Those who know Varro only from his philological and agricultural work will perhaps be surprised to find him mentioned in this context, though as a matter of fact the prefaces to the *De Re Rustica* do contain some points. It is however of the Menippean satires that I am here thinking, the fragments of which, though preserved to us only by the dullest of grammarians and lexicographers, reveal nevertheless clear traces of a pointed style admirably adapted to the Petronian lightness and gaiety of their matter. That Hortensius used point is clear from Cicero's account of his oratory,³ and Cicero's own earlier speeches show a marked taste for it. Of this he was afterwards to a large extent cured, not perhaps so much through the restraining influence of his Rhodian teacher Molo—the cause he himself seems to suggest in a passage of the *Brutus* ⁴—

¹ *De Sublim.* 4. 1.

² *Brut.* 65.

³ L.c. 326 *habebat Meneclium illud studium crebrarum uenustarumque sententiarum.*

⁴ § 316 *is dedit operam . . . ut nimis redundantes nos et supra fluentes inuenili quadam dicendi impunitate et licentia reprimeret.*

as by the growing tendency to copy Demosthenes. In general, too, I am inclined to think that it was this ambition to rival the Greeks of the best period, what one may call the earliest form of classicism, that checked until far on into the Augustan age the development of a peculiarly Roman trait. In Sallust, where imitation of the most mannered of Greek historians is combined with the cult of Cato and archaic Latin, we get a style that bears at least as much resemblance to that of Silver prose as it does to that of Thucydides.

CHAPTER II

THE EPIC

OVID'S friend, Albinovanus Pedo, belongs distinctly to the Augustans, but one of his poems, from which the elder Seneca quotes twenty-three hexameters¹ describing the emotions of the soldiers who sailed the North Sea under Germanicus in A.D. 16, dates from our period and deserves notice as an early specimen of what Warton called, à propos of Addison's *Campaign*, the 'gazette in poetry.' The metre is monotonous, the rhetoric quite like that of the declamation fragments among which Seneca cites it: one could hardly want a better bridge from Virgil and Ovid to Silver Epic.

Marcus Annaeus Lucanus,² son of the elder Seneca's youngest son Mela, was born at Corduba in A.D. 39 and educated at Rome. He learned philosophy from Cornutus, and won his spurs as a writer by a panegyric of Nero read in a competition which formed part of the emperor's new festival of A.D. 60. For some time he was in favour at court, held a quaestorship and an augurate, and read publicly a portion of the *Pharsalia*. Then came a change, and, things going from bad to worse, the poet flung himself into the disastrous Piso conspiracy, on the discovery of which,

¹ Sen. *Suas.* I. 15.

² The MSS. have preserved two biographies, one of which is probably based on that contained in the *De Viris Illustribus* of Suetonius. For Statius' birthday poem see p. 119.

after a vain attempt to save himself by incriminating his mother, he committed suicide, April 30, A.D. 65. Of the considerable literary output with which Statius and the later biography credit Lucan, and which includes *Silvae*¹ and ballet librettos, the unfinished epic alone has reached us.

After a lengthy and flattering invocation of Nero, the poet describes the causes of the war, the characters of Caesar and Pompey, the corruption of the age. Action starts with the passage of the Rubicon, but we halt again for a catalogue of troops and a picture of the panic at Rome, with many portents and predictions. The first two hundred lines of the next book continue to mark time: then we see Cato counselling Brutus and remarrying Marcia, Caesar capturing Corfinium, but failing to enclose Pompey at Brundisium. Caesar's doings at Rome and his siege of Marseilles, with the naval battle won there by D. Brutus, occupy the third, his campaign in Spain, the capture of Antonius' army in Illyricum, the defeat and suicide of Curio, the fourth book. Book Five narrates the visit of Appius Claudius to the Delphic oracle, the mutiny of Caesar's troops, his dash across the Adriatic in a fishing boat, Pompey's parting from Cornelia. Book Six is devoted to the blockade of Dyrrachium and the younger Pompey's attempt to ascertain the future from the evoked spirit of a fallen soldier. Pharsalia fills Book Seven; Pompey's flight, assassination, and burial Book Eight. Cato is the hero of Book Nine, full justice being done to his passage of the waterless and serpent-haunted desert.

¹ For the meaning of this word see p. 118. The complete list is as follows: *Iliacon*, *Catachthonion*, *Laudes Neronis*, *Orpheus*, *Saturnalia*, *Silvarum (libri) X*, *tragoedia Medea (imperfecta)*, *salticae fabulae XIV*, *epigrammata*, *Pharsalia*.

The unity of the book, already the longest of them all, is broken by the closing scene in which the head of his rival is brought to Caesar. Book Ten describes the victor at Alexandria, breaking off, after a long account of his entertainment by Cleopatra, in the middle of the nationalist rising.

Of Gaius Valerius Flaccus Setinus Balbus we know only that he dedicated his epic on the Argonautic expedition to Vespasian,¹ was a member of the college of fifteen priests that had charge of the Sibylline books² and so must have been a man of wealth and standing, was almost certainly alive in A.D. 79, when the eruption of Vesuvius which seems to inspire one of his similes³ occurred, and is spoken of by Quintilian somewhere about A.D. 92 as a writer whose death had *recently* been a severe loss to Roman letters.⁴

The extant poem, after a brief invocation, introduces us to the usurper Pelias, proposing to Jason the quest of the Golden Fleece. The ship *Argo* is built and the flower of Greece join the enterprise. Sacrifices are offered to the gods, two prophet Argonauts make cryptic utterances as to the issue of the voyage, and night falls on the heroes in bivouac beside their ship. At daybreak Jason bids farewell to his parents, a catalogue of Argonauts is given, in the order of sitting to row, Acastus, the son of Pelias, slips down stealthily to join them, and they sail. The scene shifts to Olympus, then to the cave of Aeolus, where Boreas

¹ *Arg.* 1. 7 *sqq.*

² The tripod (*cortina*) of l. 6 is explained by Servius' statement (on *Aen.* 3. 332) that every member of this priesthood kept one in his house.

³ *Arg.* 4. 507 *sicut prorupti tonuit cum forte Veseui | Hesperiae letalis apex: vixdum ignea montem | torsit hiemps, iamque Eoas cinis induit urbes.*

⁴ *Inst. Or.* 10. 1. 90 *multum in Valerio Flacco nuper amisimus.*

reports intruders on the sea. All the winds are let loose and the voyagers are in great peril until Neptune calms the tempest. The first book closes with the death of Jason's parents, who kill themselves to escape the vengeance Pelias proposes to exact for the loss of his son. In Book Two the fall of night fills the heroes with awe and alarm, which the helmsman Tiphys allays, and, coming to Lemnos, they are entertained by the women there, who in frenzy, inspired by Venus, have murdered all their menfolk save King Thoas, whom his daughter Hypsipyle enabled to escape. She reigns now in his stead, and for love of her Jason tarries until compelled by the taunts of Hercules to sail on. At Troy the latter saves the Princess Hesione from the sea-monster to whom she has been exposed a prey, and the book closes with the entertainment given the heroes by King Cyzicus in the city that bears his name. In the next book, Tiphys falling asleep by night, the ship drifts back to Cyzicus, and landing there as in some new country they are mistaken for pirates and attacked. They slay many of their old hosts, Jason Cyzicus himself. Learning the truth at dawn, they bury the dead, but suffer strange apathy and depression until a prophet Argonaut instructs them how to make atonement. In Mysia they lose Hercules and his page Hylas, for the boy is dragged down by a nymph into a spring and his master stays searching for him until the heroes after hot debate resolve to sail on. In Book Four Pollux kills King Amycus in a boxing match, Calais and Zetes free Phineus from the odious persecution of the Harpies: he in return tells them how to proceed. They pass through the 'clashing rocks' into the Euxine, and there, at the beginning of Book Five, lose one of their prophets and Tiphys

too, in whose place they choose Erginus, and so come at length to Colchis. We go back a little now, to be told of visions warning King Aeetes to watch the Fleece and wed his daughter Medea, of her betrothal to Styrrus the Albanian, of the banishment of Aeetes' brother Perses because he advised the restoration of the Fleece, of his return with an army that is even now encamped by the city. Jason, coming up from the river, meets Medea and is guided by one of her maids to the presence of the king, who promises him the Fleece in return for help against Perses and meanwhile honours him at a banquet. Book Six is mainly concerned with the battle, in which Perses is routed, but with this theme is interwoven that of Medea's love for Jason.¹ Book Seven opens with the king's base refusal to yield the prize until Jason has sown the teeth of a dragon in furrows ploughed by fire-breathing bulls. All day Medea roams restlessly about the palace, sleeping only to dream of horrors. At the request of Jason's protectress Juno, Venus disguises herself as the sorceress Circe, sister of Aeetes, and wedded to a Western prince, and brings about a tryst between Medea and Jason at the grove of Hecate. There the hero, made invulnerable by fire and taught the secret for the conquest of the warriors that spring up from the dragon seed, swears eternal remembrance of his saviour and asks her hand in marriage. Next day he successfully accomplishes the allotted tasks. In Book Eight the princess, fearful of her father's suspicions, is fleeing from the palace when she meets Jason, and by lulling to sleep the dragon guard of the Fleece enables him to carry off the treasure. *Argo* drops swiftly down

¹ For the treatment of which see p. 45.

stream, and, though the hue and cry is raised, the heroes, accepting the advice of Erginus to sail home by the *Danube*, reach the island of its delta and celebrate the nuptials of their leader and his beloved. The banquet that follows is interrupted by the approach of her brother and her fiancé in a hastily built fleet. Juno raises a storm, in which Styrrus perishes, but Absyrtus blockades his enemies, who presently talk of purchasing the Fleece at the cost of surrendering Medea. The poem breaks off in the midst of the description of her frenzied resentment.

Publius Papinius Statius was born at Naples, son of a schoolmaster in that city, who had won prizes in poetic contests held there and in various cities of Greece.¹ He lived to see his boy repeat his performance so far as Naples was concerned, but died before his victory in one of the contests organized by Domitian at Alba.² Sons of schoolmasters were not usually rich, and, although Statius once mentions an Alban estate,³ Juvenal implies that he got his living by the composition of ballet-librettos.⁴ Somewhere about A.D. 94 he was living in Rome, but contemplating a return to Naples,⁵ and it is thence that he writes the preface to his fourth book of *Silvae*, in A.D. 95—not long, one gathers, before his death. His epic on the *Seven against Thebes* occupied him twelve years and was probably completed about

¹ Cp. for the facts as to the older Statius *Silu.* 5. 3. 129 sqq., 146 sqq., for the poet's birthplace *ib.* 3. 5. 81.

² *Silu.* 5. 3. 225 sqq.

³ *Silu.* 3. 1. 61 sqq.

⁴ Juv. 7. 86 *cum fregit* (Statius) *subsellia uersu, | esurit, intactam Paridi nisi uendit Agauen.*

⁵ *Silu.* 3. 5. 12, 13.

A.D. 92, that on Achilles seems to have been begun about 95 and was never finished.¹

The first book of the *Thebais*, after invoking Domitian, proceeds to tell how, at the summons of Oedipus, the Fury brings strife upon his unnatural sons, so that they decide to rule a year in turns, and Polynices, going forth first, comes to Argos, at the same time, it chances, as Tydeus. King Adrastus finds them wrangling outside his palace, and, recognizing them as the men to whom an oracle bids him wed his daughters, offers them hospitality. In Book Two the spirit of the murdered Laius prompts Eteocles to resolve upon breaking the compact with his brother, the Argive King celebrates his daughters' nuptials, and Tydeus, the time being come for Polynices to rule at Thebes, proceeds thither as his ambassador. Eteocles, not content with insulting refusal, sets men in ambush to slay him on his way back. Of these, Tydeus kills all save Maeon, who returning to Thebes, at the beginning of the next book, speaks his mind to Eteocles and then stabs himself. At Argos, the seer Amphiaraus long refuses to reveal the issue of the war now imminent : roused at last by the abuse of the atheist Capaneus he predicts disaster. The wife of Polynices, Argia, persuades Adrastus to help her husband. Book Four starts with a long catalogue of the invaders, then passing to Thebes, describes

¹ The preface to the first book seems to have been penned about A.D. 92 (see p. 117), and he there describes himself as still anxious for the *Thebais*, though it has now left his hands : *adhuc pro Thebaide mea, quamvis me reliquerit, timeo*. The twelve years which it has occupied are mentioned *Theb. 12. 811* (*o mihi bisseuos multum uigilata per annos, | Thebai !*). The *Achilleis* he is beginning as he writes the seventh poem of the fourth book of the *Silvae* (see ll. 23, 24 *primis meus ecce metis | haeret Achilles*), the preface to which belongs to A.D. 95.

omens of evil and ambiguous answers given by the ghost of Laius to the prophet Tiresias : at the end we see the invaders brought to a standstill near Nemea by a drought that dries up all streams save one, to which the Lemnian Hypsipyle, now a slave and the nurse of King Lycurgus' infant son Opheltes, conducts them. Book Five contains her story of the Lemnian massacre, related to the generals of the host, the death of her young charge, left meanwhile at play in the meadows and attacked by a snake, and the protection afforded her by the grateful warriors against the natural resentment of Lycurgus. Book Six is concerned with the boy's funeral and funeral games. At the beginning of Book Seven comes the Theban catalogue, enumerated by an old squire who has accompanied Antigone to the ramparts : then the Argives arrive, and Jocasta comes out with her daughters to intercede with Polynices. He is showing signs of yielding, when the chance attack of two tame tigers on the chariot-driver of Amphiaraus precipitates a battle which ends with that hero's disappearance, chariot and all, in a sudden opening of the earth. In Book Eight we see exultation at Thebes, chagrin among the invaders, who appoint Theodamas in the place of the lost prophet. Presently the Thebans make a sortie, and although they are unsuccessful, Tydeus, the chief cause of their failure, is himself mortally wounded by Melanippus : the book closes with the picture of him as he lies greedily gnawing at the severed head of his foe, whom he has had strength enough to spear. Book Nine contains the deeds of Hippomedon and the death of the youthful Parthenopaeus : the former long defends the body of Tydeus, but is lured from it by false tidings (brought

by the disguised Fury), and returns only to find it carried off by the foe. He revenges his friend by much slaughter, especially at the river Ismenos, whose god presently joins in the fray: Hippomedon just escapes drowning to die by a very hail of darts upon the bank. Book Ten shows us a body of Thebans posted about the Argive camp to prevent men who have fared so ill from stealing away under cover of night. But it is these on the contrary that issuing forth fall upon them whilst they sleep, and after slaying many return safe—all but two, who stay behind searching for the bodies of Tydeus and Parthenopaeus, and are caught with their grim burdens on their shoulders. At dawn the city is hotly attacked, and, as Tiresias maintains that only the death of the 'last of the dragon brood' can save it, the young Menoeceus, Creon's son, flings himself from the ramparts to death. And now Capaneus, when he has all but scaled the wall, is struck down by a thunderbolt. In Book Eleven Polynices proposes that the issue be decided by a single combat between himself and his brother. Eteocles is at first aghast, but the sonless Creon hounds him on, and soon he is as deaf to the appeals of Jocasta as his brother to Antigone's. Both perish, and Creon, becoming king, forbids the burial of the invaders' bodies: a sentence of exile which he pronounces upon Oedipus is commuted, through the intercession of Antigone, to mere retirement to Cithaeron. Book Twelve describes the burial of the Theban dead, the departure from Argos of the women-folk of the slain leaders bent upon the recovery of their bodies, the announcement to them by a fugitive of Creon's decree, the resolve of all save Argia to seek help of Theseus, the meeting of Argia and Antigone

over the body of Polynices, their discovery and arraignment before the king, the advance and victory of the Athenians, and the death of the tyrant at the hands of Theseus, concluding with a brief allusion to the obsequies of the leaders and an *envoi* full of respectful regard for the *Aeneid*.

The *Achilleis* too begins with an invocation to Domitian, then introduces us to Thetis, alarmed by the vision of Paris sailing home with Helen, and on her way to visit Achilles in the cave of his tutor Chiron. She spends the evening with him, then, whilst he is asleep, carries him to the island of Scyros, where he is to find refuge, as a 'sister of Achilles,' at the court of Lycomedes. A glimpse of the Princess Deidamia wins the boy's consent to don woman's attire, the King accepts the charge, and the mother departs, leaving the ladies of the court delighted with their new mate. We pass now to the arming of Greece, the revelation by Calchas of Achilles' whereabouts, the despatch of Ulysses and Diomedes to fetch him. He in the meantime has secretly won the love of Deidamia, and is soon singled out from among his fair companions by the 'man of many wiles.' The marriage, and the appeal of the bride to be allowed to follow her consort to Troy, conclude the first book. The second is incomplete, breaking off where Achilles, sailing with his saviours to the army, has entertained them with an account of Chiron's methods of instruction.

Of the early history of Titus Catius Silius Italicus¹ we know nothing. He was a pleader,² and a Stoic,³ held the consulship in A.D. 68,⁴ and next year, when

¹ The full name appears only in the inscription C.I.L. 6. 1984.

² Plin. *Ep.* 3. 7. 3, Mart. 7. 63. 7.

³ Epictet. *Diss.* 3. 8. 7.

⁴ Plin. l.c. 9 *novissimus a Nerone factus est consul*.

the fall of his friend the emperor Vitellius was imminent, took part in the negotiations between him and Vespasian's brother Sabinus.¹ After this, he governed Asia,² and spent his latter days in retirement in Campania, where, finding himself afflicted with an incurable ailment, he starved himself to death probably about A.D. 102.³ Pliny devotes a letter to an account of his life and end, Martial was one of his *protégés* and often mentions or addresses him in his epigrams.⁴ One, that belongs probably to A.D. 92, implies that his *Punica*, an epic on the Hannibalic war which has come down to us, was by that time accessible to ordinary readers.⁵ Since however the emperor described at the end of Book Fourteen as having restored peace and 'checked the unbridled craze for plundering the world'⁶ is surely Domitian's successor Nerva, it seems likely that only part of the poem was published so early.

The summary of the poem is a summary of the Punic war plus the regular padding of these literary epics. Saguntum occupies two books, Hannibal's march into Italy a third, Ticinus and Trebia a fourth, Trasimene a fifth. Book Six contains mainly the story of Regulus, told by an old retainer to the son of

¹ Tac. *Hist.* 3. 65 *uerba uocesque duos testes habebant, Cluuium Rufum et Silium Italicum.*

² Plin. l.c. 3 mentions the governorship, and the evidence of coins points to tenure under Vespasian.

³ Plin. l.c. §§ 6 and 2. Mommsen assigns the third book of the letters to A.D. 101/102, but the point is much disputed and most authorities seem to put the death of Martial, which is the subject of another of its letters, as late as 104.

⁴ Plin. *Ep.* l.c., Mart. 4. 14, 7. 63, 8. 66, 9. 86, 11. 48.

⁵ 7. 63. 1 *perpetui numquam moritura uolumina Sili | qui legis et Latia carmina digna toga !*

⁶ Ll. 686 sqq.: *at ni cura uiri qui nunc dedit otia mundo | effrenum arceret populandi cuncta furorem | nudassent auidae terrasque fretumque rapinae.*

that hero of the first Punic war, a fugitive from battle. Book Seven is Fabius : Cannae and the events immediately preceding or succeeding it occupy the next three, Nine and half Ten being allotted to the actual battle. The fatal sojourn at Capua is the main theme of Book Eleven, and Twelve describes Hannibal's first defeat (at Nola), his capture of Tarentum, and vain attempt to raise the siege of Capua by attacking Rome. Book Thirteen is divided between the fall of Capua and the Homeric evocation scene in which Scipio converses with his dead father and mother and various ghosts of mythologic or historic fame. Book Fourteen is wholly Sicilian, and ends with the capture of Syracuse by Marcellus. Fifteen describes Scipio's victories in Spain, Fabius' recapture of Tarentum, the death of Marcellus, the battle of Metaurus ; Sixteen, Scipio's negotiations with Masinissa and Syphax and the games wherewith he honours father's and uncle's memory ; Seventeen, the crossing into Italy, the withdrawal of Hannibal, and Zama.

In examining the poems of which the reader has now had a summary he will find it convenient to take first a number of characteristics more or less common to them all. Nowhere is the influence of the declamation schools more manifest ; they may offer lip service to Virgil, these poets, but they sacrifice at the altars of Ovid : they are convinced that nothing that is not epigrammatic or allusive can possibly attract a reader. So Lucan thinks that the best way of bringing home to us the vexation of becalmed sailors is to confront us with the paradox ' All *hope of shipwreck* vanished now ! ' ¹ and Valerius, wishing to say some-

¹ *Phars.* 5. 455 *naufragii spes omnis abit.*

thing distinctive about an Argonaut, remembers that he was father to the Ajax slain by Minerva with one of her father's bolts, and pens the conundrum :

He that will some day sorrow o'er a bolt
Not of Jove's hurling.¹

Thebes had seven gates, Niobe fourteen children, and Statius thinks it poetic to emphasize the fact that there can be two funeral processions per gate.² If Silius is less strained and emphatic, and so easier to read, it is, I fear, his lack of inventive power rather than his judgment we must thank. The declamations loved horrors, and these epics are full of them. The depravity of Lucan's tastes in this direction is fortunately something unique, but even a lover of the beautiful like Statius lingers morbidly over the effects of a serpent's bite on a child's body,³ or the ghastly aspect of the mutilated Oedipus.⁴ Lucan is full of the ranting hyperbole of the schools, Statius is little better: even the comparatively sane Valerius will have the height of Caucasus appreciably increased by a heavy fall of snow.⁵ The declaimer neglected the needs of the case in order to enlarge on some aspect in the treatment whereof he hoped to shine, and these poets let the episode extinguish the poem. Sometimes it is a permissible one, that is developed at inexcusable length. A Roman could hardly be expected to ignore the omens that were said to have heralded the Civil War, but Lucan, not content with sixty lines of common Livian portent, calls in a soothsayer, an astrologer,

¹ *Arg.* I. 372 *tortum non a Ioue fulmen Oileus | qui gemet.*

² *Theb.* 3. 198 *bina per ingentes stipabant funera portas.*

³ *Theb.* 5. 596 *sqq.*

⁴ *Theb.* I. 71, 72; II. 582 *sqq.*

⁵ *Arg.* 6. 611, *ubi ipse gelu magnoque incanuit imbre | Caucasus et summas abiit hibernus in Arctos.*

and an inspired matron—a hundred hexameters more! ¹ An epic poem must have its storm: Virgil's is a little long, seeing how powerful a few lines proved in Homer, but at any rate he brings us out into the gale, gasping for breath and every moment more uneasy about the damage the good ship is sustaining. In Lucan—apt disciple of Ovid—we never get outside at all, but watch through double panes all the contorted capers that the tumbled waters of a conjurer poet can cut. ² Often however the episode is absolutely irrelevant. Compare for instance that of the Lemnian massacre in Valerius and Statius. ³ In the former all is nearly in order, would be wholly so had he but seen his way to making Hypsipyle tell the story instead of keeping the Argonauts waiting impatiently in the offing while he did it himself. But in Statius the excrescence is inexcusable, and we feel that it is not only Hypsipyle who forgets her duty. Lucan makes Curio's invasion of Africa the occasion for a seventy-line account of the wrestling-match in which Hercules there met Antaeus. ⁴ After Hercules and the Argonauts have parted company, Valerius cannot resist the temptation to make him proceed to Caucasus by land and unbind Prometheus—just as the *Argo* reaches the vicinity. Here, it is true, the pains at which the poet is to give the affair some kind of connexion with his theme by making the heroes find pieces of rock and ice falling around them, even see the dying vulture float over their heads, ⁵ seem to argue an uneasy conscience. Silius knows no such qualms, unworthy of the author of an epic that runs to seventeen books.

¹ *Phars.* 1. 522 *sqq.*, 584 *sqq.*, 639 *sqq.*, 674 *sqq.*

² *Phars.* 5. 593-653.

³ *Arg.* 2. 82-310, *Theb.* 5. 29-498.

⁴ *Phars.* 4. 593-655.

⁵ *Arg.* 5. 154-176.

Another rhetorical trick from which Valerius alone of these writers is tolerably free is that of obtruding the author's personality on his reader by means of apostrophe or moralizing. In the old epics it was only in the invocation that a poet dared come before the curtain, and Virgil kept pretty well to their rules. Lucan and Statius are for ever apostrophizing, the former often at great length. Silius and he, Stoics first and poets afterwards, naturally indulge in a good deal of what in prose would be called diatribe. But even Statius must round off the rupture between the sons of Oedipus with a twenty-line tirade on the theme, ' Yet what was it to be king in those simple days? How small the empire for which they wrangled ! ' ¹

The truth is that none of these poets let go an opportunity for the display of erudition. All geography, in particular, comes handy to them. If in *Pharsalia* the scene shifts to Thessaly, in *Punica* to Sicily, we get a gazetteer-like account of those countries.² The passage of Symplegades is followed in Valerius by a twenty-line account of Euxine, and his catalogue of Scythians reads like an extract from Pliny's geographical books.³ Lucan tells us that Pompey visits a witch

What time beneath our hemisphere
The sun brings midday : ⁴

of what use to know the lore of the Antipodes if you are to say with the rest of the world that a thing happened at midnight? Silius represents his Scipio consoling a spirit by the promise of funeral honours :

¹ *Theb.* 1. 144-164.

² *Luc.* 6. 333-412, *Sil.* 14. 11-78.

³ *Arg.* 4. 711-732, 6. 33-162.

⁴ *Phars.* 6. 570 *alta | nocte poli, Titan medium quo tempore ducit | sub nostra tellure diem.*

in order to improve on Virgil's Aeneas and Palinurus episode, he has put into the mouth of the Roman general an inept, but learned, account of the various methods by which the nations dispose of the bodies of their dead.¹

The action of the old epic included in its sphere heaven as well as earth, and Virgil's deeply religious mind readily accepts the tradition. Lucan rejects it, but even his unconventional genius cannot entirely dispense with the supernatural element, and the fine description of the heavenward flight of Pompey's disembodied spirit² is some compensation for the tedious episodes of the oracle and the evocation.³ His successors too tend to include the nether realm within the compass of their action, Valerius dwelling on the passage to Elysium of Jason's parents and peopling the boxing match with the ghosts of Amycus' victims released to see his downfall,⁴ Statius opening the eighth book with the sudden appearance of Amphiaraus amidst the shades.⁵ But what in Lucan served as a substitute is with them a supplement: as authors of orthodox mythological epic they claim the right to move Olympus too. Juno and Pallas support Jason against the Sun, Aeetes' father, and Mars, to whom the Fleece is dedicate.⁶ Juno hates Thebes as furiously as she ever hated Troy,⁷ whilst Venus protects dear Harmonia's city,⁸ and Mars possesses a roving commission to stir up conflict everywhere.⁹ Bacchus and Hercules, too, do their best for the country of their birth: the former it is

¹ *Pun.* 13. 468-487.

³ *Phars.* 5. 71-224, 6. 434-825.

⁵ *Theb.* 8. 1-126.

⁷ *Stat. Theb.* 1. 250 *sqq.*

⁹ *L.c.* 3. 229 *sqq.*, 7. 1 *sqq.*

² *Phars.* 9. 1 *sqq.*

⁴ *Arg.* 1. 827-851, 4. 258-260.

⁶ *Val. Fl.* 1. 503 *sqq.*

⁸ *L.c.* 3. 263 *sqq.*

that causes the drought of Book Four,¹ but the other seems hampered by the knowledge that some authorities make him out an Argive. Meeting Pallas in the field he chivalrously retires before his former patroness, leaving the unhappy Theban whom he has been protecting to face Tydeus alone.² The lesser deities play quite a rôle in these later epics. Boreas warns Aeolus of the presence of the Argonauts, Pan starts the attack of the Cyzicans on their old guests,³ *Virtus* and *Pietas* take a part in the action of the *Thebais*.⁴ Cold though the convention of machinery necessarily leaves us, it is only fair to observe that Valerius uses it with some effect. The Hylas episode, which conveniently removes that Hercules whose name was firmly settled in the list of Argonauts and yet must necessarily overshadow that of the leader Jason, was no invention of the Roman's, but he seems first to have lent it probability by connecting the loss of Hylas with Juno's famous grudge.⁵ In Silius the thing is at its worst: can one forgive an imagination that makes the river god of Trebia play Scamander to the Achilles of a Roman consul, Aeolus loose Voltumnus to blow dust in the face of the Romans, Neptune raise a storm against Hannibal as he leaves Italy—to calm it at the request of Venus, fearful lest Scipio lose the chance of winning Zama! ⁶

The similes in these poets are Alexandrian rather than Homeric—they are used as an end in themselves, ornaments of style and not mere aids to description. Most of them aim at painting a pretty, or at least

¹ Stat. *Theb.* 4. 652 sqq. : cp. 7. 145 sqq.

² L.c. 8. 500 sqq.

³ Val. Fl. 1. 574 sqq., 3. 46 sqq.

⁴ 10. 780 sqq., 11. 457 sqq.

⁵ *Arg.* 3. 487 sqq.

⁶ *Pun.* 4. 573 sqq., 9. 491 sqq., 17. 236 sqq.

vivid, picture in the miniature of a few lines or parading the author's intimate knowledge of legend. Occasionally these tendencies coalesce: there is much happiness, for instance, in Valerius' comparison of the as yet innocent Medea to Proserpine 'ere yet she gazed on Hell and her beauty lost its lustre.'¹ Generally speaking, however, it is the 'learned' similes that please us least—and yet it is the more poetic authors, Valerius and Statius, that most affect them, a melancholy example of the ruinous effect a convention may have on Latin poetry. These two agree also in the tendency to use similes about twice as frequently as the other pair. Those of Statius, indeed, would, if united, occupy almost the space of an average book of the *Thebais*. In another point Valerius shows better judgment than any of the others: he is much more sparing than they with similes of more than four lines long, and has none of the monsters with seven lines or more of which the other epics supply a full thirty. Prolixity of this kind is of course excusable when it is due to the desire to make simile and situation tally very exactly, but our poets seldom try this effect, and their long similes are generally due to digression on a side issue. Statius is particularly liable to this fault. Oedipus emerges from retirement: it is as though Charon rose from Styx,

And meanwhile, with no ferryman to ply,
The arrears grew swift, and all along the banks
The ages waited.²

The Thebans are cowed by Hippomedon, like

¹ *Arg.* 5. 346 *priusquam | palluit et uiso pulsus decor omnis Auerno.*

² *Theb.* II. 591 *interea longum cessante magistro | crescat opus totisque
exspectent saecula ripis.*

small fry that lurk in the seaweed, in terror of a dolphin—

And rise not till he to the surface bounds
Eager to race some bark descried afar.¹

Pliny records this habit of the animal's, and the interest taken about this time in natural history is often reflected in these similes. Juba delivers an attack which he has no intention of pushing, and Lucan thinks of the ichneumon feinting with its tail.² Jason, standing apart from his comrades in the arena, is like a straggler from the great procession of migrant birds, left to the mercy of winter blast or summer glare.³ Medea roams restless over the palace :

E'en so a hound that long hath share enjoyed
Of master's bed and welcome at his board,
Sick with strange illness, frenzy's harbinger,
Ere it departs roams whining o'er the house.⁴

Valerius, one may note in passing, particularly affects this way of illustrating a state of mind, though perhaps the best specimen to be found in our poets is a passage where Statius compares the return of the sole survivor of the ambushade to a shepherd whose herd has fallen a prey to wolves : he dare not face his master, but

With wailing fills the countryside, and stands
Sick at the silence of the spacious fold
Or calls the long roll of his slaughtered bulls.⁵

He jests at scars who never felt a wound, and Homer's audience, largely consisting of men who had had practical experience of battle, would have resented

¹ *Theb.* 9. 246 *nec prius emersi quam summa per aequora flexus | emicet et uisis malit certare carinis* : cp. *Plin. Nat. Hist.* 9. 24.

² *Luc.* 4. 724 sqq.

³ *Val. Fl.* 7. 559 *solus | stabat, ut extremis desertus ab orbibus ales, | quem iam lassa dies Austrique ardentis harenæ | aut quem Rîphaeis errantem rursus ad arces | nix et caerulei Boreae ferus abstulit horror.*

⁴ *Val. Fl.* 7. 124 sqq.

⁵ *Theb.* 3. 51, 52.

any attempt on a poet's part to display ingenuity in the matter of the blows his doughty warriors deal and endure. With them a wound was a wound, and as such in itself an interesting topic. The Romans wrote for men who had acquired in the arena a taste for refined butchery and had to make concessions accordingly. Even Virgil regales us with the pictures of Ebysus, with a firebrand dashed in his face and his long beard in flames, or Maeon, whose chest is torn open by a spear which then pierces the arm of his brother as he rushes up in support.¹ Before him Ennius had represented the trumpet of a decapitated soldier completing the call which he had just begun to sound,² after him Ovid filled the battle scenes of the *Metamorphoses* with similar extravagances, and found apt pupils in Lucan and Statius. The latter, indeed, actually borrows Ennius' trumpeter, and elsewhere makes an overwrought soldier slash at a hand that lies severed, but still playing with the sword-hilt on the ground.³ Lucan describes the blood of a man pierced by two javelins coming opposite ways as pausing in doubt which way to flow, and stops to note that the crash of two colliding warships is hardly deadened by the body of a man that has been caught between them.⁴ Valerius and Silius do not often err in this way, though the latter has at least one shocking lapse, when, after describing how a fugitive's head is sliced off by his pursuer, he proceeds :

There at its owner's feet straightway it fell :
The body, by its frenzied rush borne on,
Crashed down beyond it.⁵

¹ *Aen.* 12. 300, 10. 336 sqq.

² *Ann.* 519 *cumque caput caderet, carmen tuba sola peregit.*
Zola has copied the absurdity in *La Débâcle* ii. 7.

³ *Theb.* 11. 56 ; 8. 443, 444.

⁴ *Phars.* 3. 589 ; 656, 657.

⁵ *Pun.* 13. 246 sqq.

The last of the common features to which I shall allude is the remarkable length to which these poets carry the practice of imitation. That they should make free use of Homer, as all but Lucan do, is hardly surprising. Simple translation from the Greek, involving, as it might, the conquest for Italy of some immortal phrase or thought, was always looked upon at Rome as quite a considerable achievement : imitation of the Greek orators had a definite place on the rhetoric syllabus. Valerius borrows but slightly outside battle-scenes : he misunderstands his original once, with his 'horses of Mars, Panic, and Fear,'¹ which obviously represents a passage of the *Iliad*, where the god bids two *henchmen*, who bear these names (or rather their Greek equivalents), get ready his horses. Statius and Silius borrow wholesale : both have a river battle,² both prefer the invocation inferno of the Eleventh *Odyssey* to the descent of *Aeneid* Six ;³ the games in Statius are Homeric rather than Virgilian and his catalogues contain versions of lines from Homer's. It is the Virgil imitation of these epics that awakes our surprise. There is, of course, no question of plagiarism : the jewels of the *Aeneid* were too famous for any one to hope to wear them as his own. As impossible, surely, is the theory that our poets were so steeped in Virgil and devoid of imagination that they saw everything through the medium of his epic. The clue is perhaps to be found in the passage of the *Thebais* where an episode closely resembling that of Virgil's Nisus and Euryalus is rounded off, as that is, by an apostrophe

¹ *Arg.* 3. 89, 90 (=Hom. *Il.* 15. 119).

² *Theb.* 9. 225 *sqq.*, *Pun.* 4. 573 *sqq.*

³ *Theb.* 4. 419 *sqq.*, *Pun.* 13. 400 *sqq.*

to the spirits of the two friends. 'Weak though my voice be,' says the poet, 'still shall your fame live, and Euryalus and Nisus welcome you to their side!' ¹ No attempt here at anything but frank confession of one's literary model, and this is perhaps the principle that underlies the phenomenon in general. The Alexandrians had treated the Homeric poems similarly: Virgil himself had culled phrases, even lines, from Ennius. The borrowing is not confined to that of stock episodes such as storms, games, banquets, funerals, and so forth. Lucan, who is, generally speaking, the most independent of these writers, cannot describe the armies getting ready for Pharsalia without using language that reminds us of the Latin preparations for the war with Aeneas, and his harbour of Brundisium is remarkably like the Libyan cove of *Aeneid* One.² Hylas and Parthenopaeus were in the story long before the time of Valerius and Statius, but in describing their deeds the latter are clearly inspired by the recollection of Virgil's Iulus.³ The attack on Tydeus is mentioned by Homer: as we read it in Latin we recognize a doublet of that most ineffective ambush of the eleventh *Aeneid*.⁴ There can be hardly one striking episode, one golden thought of that poem but finds an echo in at least one of our epics. *The vanquished's only hope—despair of victory* says Aeneas, and so Caesar's ferryman throws him the paradox

Our only hope is to despair of passage.⁵

¹ *Theb.* 10. 445 sqq.

² *Phars.* 7. 139 sqq. (= *Aen.* 7. 626 sqq.), 2. 616 sqq. (= *Aen.* 1. 162 sqq.).

³ *Val. Fl.* 3. 183 sqq. (= *Aen.* 9. 590 sqq.), *Stat. Theb.* 9. 808 sqq. = *Aen.* 9. 646 sqq.).

⁴ *Stat. Theb.* 2. 496 sqq. (= *Aen.* 11. 522 sqq.).

⁵ *Luc.* 5. 574 *desperare uiam et uetitos conuertere cursus | sola salus* (cp. *Aen.* 2. 354).

Aeneas finds Hector sadly changed from the Hector that once returned from the slaying of Patroclus: Io, in the climax of her misery, elicits from Valerius the similar thought—

Ah, how changed
From that fair heifer she at first became.¹

Some day 'twill be a pleasure to look back on this, Aeneas tells his men, and Adrastus tells Tydeus and Eteocles, found wrangling at his doors, it may be so with them:

May be this strife but heralds love to come,
Its memory then a pleasure.²

Aeneas invites his hearers to learn from one crime of the Greeks the character of the whole nation: in Silius a prisoner, about to recount to Hannibal the story of the battle of Cremona, says,

Thou shalt come to know
From but one combat all the Fabian house.³

One at least of Virgil's episodes is echoed in each of these epics, that in which twin brothers, indistinguishable often to their parents, meet Pallas in the field, who 'made grim distinction betwixt them,' cutting off the hand of one and the head of the other.⁴ Lucan and Statius reproduce both points, Valerius contents himself with the parental quandary, but Silius, eager to outdo every one, produces a characteristically tasteless 'comedy of errors.' Saguntum can hold out no longer, most of its people are making an end of themselves, and whilst two twins are slaying each other, their mother rushes between them, crying

¹ *Arg.* 4. 398 *qualis et a prima quantum mutata iuvenca* (cp. *Aen.*

2. 274 *sqq.*).

² *Stat. Theb.* 1. 472 *forsan et has venturus amor praemiserit iras | ut meminisse iuuat* (cp. *Aen.* 1. 203).

³ *Pun.* 7. 39 *nosces Fabios certamine ab uno* (cp. *Aen.* 2. 65, 66).

⁴ *Aen.* 10. 390 *sqq.*

to Eurymedon, 'Nay, Lycormas, rather slay me,'
to Lycormas, 'What frenzy this, Eurymedon?'¹

Yet only a superficial reader can fail to observe amidst so much that is common stock clear traces of the individuality of these writers. Lucan has genius, but no judgment, and is conspicuous for a certain independence of spirit of which we have already seen the influence in his decisive rejection of divine machinery and severe restraint in the matter of Homer reminiscences. He abounds in forcible and pathetic lines, and conceives fine thoughts, which he too often spoils by putting them in the mouths of unsuitable persons or repeating them *ad nauseam* or vouchsafing them only after his reader is too tired to appreciate them. Age might have set much right here, but it could hardly have remedied the fact that Lucan lacked not merely Virgil's sensibility to beauty, but even that very shallow conception of it that fell to the lot of Ovid. Is there in all the *Pharsalia*, crowded with descriptions as it is, a really beautiful scene? In all its well-oiled hexameters a really tuneful line? As for its composition, its defects can be summed up very briefly: half the episodes would be better away, and there are three heroes. For the formal hero is overshadowed by the villain Caesar, and the person whom we are expected to admire is—Lucan himself. The most favourable specimen I can quote is from the panegyric of Pompey, put in the mouth of Cato and much admired by Macaulay—

He that is dead was one that never saw,
As saw our ancestors, where power must halt,
Yet, in this age that lacks regard for right,

¹ See Luc. 3. 605, 606; Val. Fl. 1. 367, 368; Stat. *Theb.* 9. 292 sqq.; Sil. 2. 636 sqq.

Served us : his greatness nought our freedom harmed ;
 And he alone, when all the mob was fain
 To be his slave, plain citizen would stay.
 He ruled the senate—when it ruled the world,
 Claimed nought by right of war, would even have Rome
 Free to withhold what he would have her give,
 Grew over rich, yet brought into the state
 More than he kept himself, knew when to sheathe
 The sword he 'd rushed to seize, would sooner be
 Soldier than statesman, yet in arms wooed peace,
 Gladly took office, gladly laid it down.
 Pure was his house, from all debauchery free,
 Ne'er by its master's splendour changed for worse.
 And so his name throughout the world was known
 And held in honour : well it served our state.¹

Valerius, Statius, Silius—all pay Lucan the tribute of imitation. Quintilian praises his spirit and epigrammatic eloquence,² Tacitus classes him with Virgil and Horace.³ Numerous MSS. testify to his popularity in the Middle Ages, Dante ranks him fourth of the poets and copies a list of snakes from Book Nine,⁴ Petrarch often quotes him. Tasso's *Gerusalemme* and the plays of Garnier, Corneille, and Hughes use him freely : the battle between Arthur and Modred in *The Misfortunes of Arthur* is mainly amplification of points from Book Seven. Marlowe translated Book One, May the historian of the Long Parliament, the whole poem into verse. The republicanism that attracted May no doubt excluded our poet from the Delphin series, but the Revolution brought him honour, and one of his lines was engraved on the swords of the National Guards. Coleridge thought the epic lacking in taste, but a wonderful

¹ *Phars.* 9. 190-203.

² Quint. 10. 1. 90 *Lucanus ardens et concitatus et sententiis clarissimus.*

³ *Dial.* 20.

⁴ *Infern.* 4. 88-90, 24. 85 sqq. (= *Phars.* 9. 700 sqq.).

work for so young an author,¹ whilst Shelley has, at least, one passage inspired by it and highly reminiscent of its style :

All my being,
Like him whom the Numidian seps did thaw
Into a dew with poison, is dissolved.²

In Valerius we have, I consider, a true poet, and one who in his appreciation of the power which the simple and natural can exercise upon our emotions and imagination falls little short of Lucretius and Catullus themselves. That his judgment was, in many respects, sounder than that of his rivals the reader will have already gathered from what has been said on general characteristics. He compares favourably, too, with Apollonius of Rhodes, whose *Argonautica* he has followed pretty closely as far as the plan of his poem is concerned, and occasionally translates. On the whole, however, Apollonius is his foil rather than his model. The Greek writer was a professor first and a poet afterwards : the geographical dissertation with which his Jason answers Medea's question as to the whereabouts of his native land is almost enough in itself to prove that.³ In Valerius the very question is full of poetry :

Tell me, when thou art gone,
What quarter of the heavens am I to watch ?

The speaker does not pause for reply, passing rapidly on to contrast the happy future that awaits him with the death to which her father may condemn her, which for his sake she will gladly meet,⁴ but when the

¹ *Table-talk*, Sept. 2, 1833.

² *Prometheus Unbound* 3. 1. 39 sqq.

³ *Arg.* 3. 1070-1094.

⁴ *Arg.* 7. 478 sqq.

answer comes, it is the only one a hero and a lover could vouchsafe :

Think'st thou I care for aught, if I lose thee ?
 Away from thee, can suffer any clime ?
 To the King's mercy rather give me back
 And cancel all thy spells : I like them not.¹

Apollonius, indeed, is inferior here not merely to Valerius, but to himself : the theory that he never sinks, advanced by the author of the treatise *On the Sublime*, is not quite sound. Many of the Latin poet's victories are won in fairer fight. In particular, Apollonius' account of the passion of Medea is reckoned the most brilliant part of his work, and Virgil paid it the tribute of imitation in the fourth *Aeneid*. Yet Valerius manages to treat the same theme with originality and power : in psychological probability his version seems to me superior to anything that has reached us from antiquity. In Apollonius love comes to Medea in the conventional Greek way : Cupid's dart takes immediate effect, and, if for a moment the victim thinks it is mere pity that she feels, by the time her sister Chalciope comes to plead for Jason she has realized the truth : there remains only the struggle with maidenly shame and filial piety.² Valerius does not, of course, ignore these powerful emotions, but he concentrates on the delineation of the actual dawn of love. In substituting for the wound of Cupid's arrows 'poison' which Medea absorbs by handling the trinkets of Venus, worn by Juno in her disguise as Chalciope, he is, of course, merely varying the device by which his model at the end of the first *Aeneid* prepares his reader for Dido's

¹ *Arg.* 7. 490-492.

² See *Arg.* 3. 275 *sqq.*, 466 *sqq.*, 636 *sqq.*, 741 *sqq.*

fatal passion.¹ But whereas Virgil then leaves us, during the next two books, to imagine the gradual smouldering of the flames to the conflagration that meets us in the opening lines of Book Four, Valerius enables us to follow the infatuation of his heroine almost step by step. Her first sight of Jason makes no slight impression,² but she is not, as in Apollonius, present at the levée, nor is she mentioned in the course of the banquet at the end of Book Five. It is not until the fighting has begun that we meet her again, in the middle of Book Six.³ Juno, disguised as Chalciope, has brought her to the ramparts, where she recognizes Jason and begins to observe the part he takes in the fray.

As first the wind toys lightly with the leaves
And sways with gentle puffs the topmost boughs :
Anon the hapless ships its fury feel : ⁴

so grows Medea's love at the sight of his bravery. She fails to note her companion's departure, leaning recklessly over the battlement, lost in the hero's fortunes—

Oft as the stalwart chiefs in serried ranks
Beset the hero and the storm of darts
Burst on him only, e'en so oft herself,
By stone and javelin there is buffeted. ⁵

Other combatants do glorious deeds, die glorious deaths : her eyes are for Jason only, and when nightfall ends the battle and she leaves the walls, faint and worn, thoughts of him obsess her.⁶ Another pleasing passage in Apollonius is the trysting-scene,⁷ but there

¹ *Arg.* 6. 668 *sqq.*, *Aen.* 1. 717 *sqq.*

³ *Arg.* 6. 477 *sqq.*

⁵ *Arg.* 6. 683-685.

⁷ *Arg.* 3. 955 *sqq.*

² *Arg.* 5. 373 *sqq.*

⁴ *Arg.* 6. 664-666.

⁶ *Arg.* 6. 757 *sqq.*

is nothing in it that seems to me comparable with the feeling and imagination of these extracts from the corresponding portion of Valerius :

Even as on flock and shepherd panic bursts
At dead of night, or in the deeps of hell
Darkling and voiceless meet the shadow ghosts :
So in the mingled gloom of grove and night
They twain bewildered toward each other drew,
Like silent pines or stirless cypresses
That boisterous Auster hath not ruffled yet.
Then, as they rooted stood, with silent eyes,
Night speeding on, fain would Medea now
Have Jason lift his face, and speak her first.

Thus he. She, trembling, finds the suppliant done
And her own answer due, nor sees, distraught,
How to begin her tale, how order it
And how far take it, fain would have all told
In the first word—but shame and fear forbid
E'en that first utterance.

Her speaking done,
Now more and more she found her fancy roam
The deep seas o'er, saw now the Greeks set sail
Without herself. 'Twas then love's fiercest pang
Smote her : she seized his hand, and spake him low :
' Remember me : I shall remember thee,
Of that be sure ! ' ¹

The imagination of Valerius is a vivid one, and he can express it briefly and clearly, to the great advantage of the pictures he has given us of *Argo's* departure, with Jason cutting the moorings and the sunlight gleaming on the shields along her bulwarks ; ² of the first night at sea :

The hour brought deeper terrors, as they saw
Heaven's aspect changed, mountain and countryside
Snatched from their view, gross darkness all around,
Awful the very hush, the silent world,
The signs, the sky with wide-flung tresses starred ; ³

¹ *Arg.* 7. 400-409, 431-435, 472-477.

² *Arg.* 1. 488 *sqq.*

³ *Arg.* 2. 38-42.

of the nymph returning to her spring, her startled face eloquent of the alarm with which the sight of Hercules has filled her;¹ of that hero's uneasiness at the absence of Hylas, where the similes come flying fast and we seem to feel the gloom of night descending, hear the crash of the forests he scours;² of the despair of the Argonauts, as they watch the pyre of their steersman, and it 'seems as though 'twas the ship herself that was afire, and setting them down in mid-ocean.'³ The composition, too, of the poem deserves some praise—a rare thing with a Silver poet. The 'probability' of the story is carefully managed. In Apollonius the heroes take to the water like ducks; in Valerius, as we have seen, nightfall brings some fear. In Apollonius Medea's hope that her sister will appeal to her for help is no sooner fulfilled than she entertains thoughts of suicide: in Valerius these come more naturally at a moment when, after fondly imagining that she had conquered her weakness, she suddenly finds herself vanquished.⁴ The mere fact that later books show less care in these matters is to me evidence to support the theory that the poem was left unfinished. One last point: Valerius has handled with considerable skill a difficulty more or less inherent in his theme, the dependence of the hero on the arts of a woman. Apollonius, so far from attempting to gloss the matter over, records the indignation of one of the Argonauts at the mere thought of such a victory.⁵ The Latin Jason wins the prize fairly enough by prowess in battle: only when Aeetes

¹ *Arg.* 3. 532 *attonitos referebat ab Hercule uoltus.*

² *L.c.* 572 *sqq.* (similes at 577 *sqq.*, 581 *sqq.*, 587 *sqq.*).

³ *Arg.* 5. 33 *tunc ipsa cremari uisa ratis medioque uiros deponere ponto.*

⁴ *Apoll. Rhod.* 3. 801 *sqq.*, *Val. Fl.* 7. 323 *sqq.* ⁵ *Arg.* 3. 556 *sqq.*

plays false and has lost every claim to sympathy is Medea's aid invoked. Her drawing is not successful: it needs a world poet to do justice to her weird figure, at once so human and yet so supernatural.

Quintilian's verdict on Valerius was given above: neither poet nor poem are mentioned again till Poggio in 1417 discovered at St. Gall a MS. containing the first three books and part of the fourth. By the time the *editio princeps* appeared in 1474, MSS. containing seven and a half books had become available: one used for the Bologna edition of 1519 still remains our chief authority for the text. Quotations from Valerius are so rare that a certain interest attaches to any passage that seems to derive even indirectly from him. Tasso when he sets Erminia on the ramparts to watch the duel between her lover Tancredi and the Saracen Argante has certainly Ovid's Scylla in mind, but the words

sempre che la spada il Pagan mosse
sentì nell' alma il ferro e le percosse.¹

are surely conscious echo of the passage about Medea cited on p. 45. Where did Rabelais get the Scythian nymph Ora if not from the catalogue of Book Six? ² The elder Balzac's knowledge of a passage where Jason sees Fame on the banks of the Phasis calling the youth of Greece to seek her there, from which he holds Malherbe to have borrowed, may have been derived from an anthology: the only Valerius quotation I have observed in the *Anatomy of Melancholy* comes from the same episode.³ Some lines in Manzoni's

¹ *Ger. Lib.* 6. 63.

² Rabelais, *Pantagruel* iv. 38, *Arg.* 6. 48 sqq.

³ Balzac, *Entretiens* xxxi.; Malherbe, *Odes* 9. 61 sqq.; Val. Fl. 1. 76 sqq.; Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy* 1, 2, 3, 14.

Marzo 1821 are certainly inspired by the speech with which Jason urges Acastus to join his enterprise, and this is actually quoted and translated in the *Rambler* of 24th August 1751. Coleridge allows Valerius prettiness 'in particular passages,'¹ and Byron prefixes to some verses to the Earl of Clare the closing words of the touching farewell of Hylas.

Macaulay found in the *Thebais* but two lines worthy of a great poet :² Coleridge showed better judgment, holding Statius 'a truer poet than Lucan, though very extravagant sometimes.'³ The bombast to which he refers is the more provoking that the offender is really a master of the short, telling strokes of the restrained artist. Could contempt be more effectively represented than by the picture of Tydeus flinging away his flag of truce as he leaves the presence of Eteocles, or taunting his fifty assailants with a 'Cowards, and too few !'⁴ Reluctance, than by that of Hippomedon, as he leaves his friend's corpse, 'still gazing back and ready for recall' ?⁵ Respect for a teacher, than in the last words of the speech with which Thetis endeavours to persuade Achilles to don feminine attire : 'Chiron shall never know' ?⁶ The sudden rising of the spectators at a critical point of the race, than in the line, 'Flashed, as they swept to their feet, the seats all bare' ?⁷ And there are fine thoughts and images too. The crowd stands aghast

¹ *Table-talk*, Sept. 2, 1833.

² *Life and Letters* (Nov. 30, 1836) : *clamorem, qualis bello supremus apertis|urbibus aut pelago iam descendente carina* (3. 56, 57).

³ *Table-talk*, l.c.

⁴ *Theb.* 2. 478, 479 ; 668 o *timidi paucique* !

⁵ *Theb.* 9. 170.

⁶ *Ach.* 1. 274.

⁷ *Theb.* 6. 449 *omniaque excusso patuere sedilia uolgo*.

over the body of a vampire that has preyed upon the children of the community :

After those tears joy's ecstasy is still
But wan and sickly.¹

The march on Thebes finds Tydeus

healed of his wounds and blithe
Soon as the trumpet sounded.²

The Argives, unable to hold the funeral of Amphiaraus, find comfort in calling to mind his wisdom,

As tho' thereby they rendered to the pyre
The flames and offerings due, the mournful rites,
Or laid in kindly earth his soul to rest.³

At the council, men just promoted to the place of fallen leaders :

Yet have no joy and grieve to have climbed so high.⁴

The invaders come on, eyes intent on the walls,

recking nought of death
And blind to every weapon save their own.⁵

Oedipus, insulted by Creon,

Lets go his daughter and his staff, and stands,
Anger his sole support.⁶

In Statius that sensitiveness for which we love Virgil verges sometimes upon sentimentality. Farmers lamenting the havoc of a storm find time to pity those it has caught at sea ; after the death of Tiphys, the Argonauts fancy the very winds have lost their vigour.⁷ Thetis, satisfied with the haven chosen for Achilles, reminds the poet of a bird that has found a shady nook

¹ *Theb.* i. 620.

² *Theb.* 8. 209, 210.

⁵ *Theb.* 10. 543.

⁷ *Theb.* 11. 117 *sqq.*, 8. 212 *sqq.*

² *Theb.* 4. 94, 95.

⁴ *Theb.* 10. 181.

⁶ *Theb.* 11. 675, 676.

where neither cold nor snake nor man can harm her brood,

and scarce upon the bough
Is lighted, but the tree hath won her heart.¹

An elm falls, bringing with it a vine that has been trained upon its branches :

Most grieves the elm, that now two growths must miss,
And, falling, sorrows less for her own boughs
Than the familiar clusters she must bruise.²

There is hardly a more tender passage in all Latin poetry than the description of the child Opheltes playing in the meadow :

There on the bosom of the springtide earth
'Mid herbage lush, now moves he slowly on
With face thrust downward, crushing as he goes
The yielding grasses, now for draughts desired
Calls tearful to his nurse, then once again
Breaks into smiles, cons o'er and o'er the words
That wrestle with his infant lips, and marks
Amazed the forest's din, or all that comes
Must clutch, or mouth agape inhales the day.³

Of Statius' Greek models we know little, and that little concerns only the *Thebais*. The scholiast on one passage⁴ says it came from Antimachus, a contemporary of Plato's and himself author of an epic on Thebes of which only meagre fragments have reached us. The influence of Euripides we can partially gauge ourselves: several fragments of the *Hypsipyle* contain closely parallel passages, Antigone's squire on the wall comes from the *Phoenissae*,⁵ and Book Twelve contains some reminiscences of the *Supplices*. Nothing could be much worse than the composition: the first six books drag terribly, scenes

¹ *Ach.* 1. 216 *uix stetit in ramis, et protinus arbor amatur.*

² *Theb.* 8. 544 *sqq.*

³ *Theb.* 4. 786 *sqq.*

⁴ *Theb.* 3. 466.

⁵ *Theb.* 7. 243 *sqq.*, *Phoen.* 88 *sqq.*

and similes recur, the characters are very rudely drawn, the two brothers overshadowed by the other chiefs. In metre and language Statius is a bolder innovator than any predecessor since Lucretius. His hexameter, unlike that of the others we have been considering, is Virgilian rather than Ovidian, but has a certain vigorous tone of its own. The list of words or meanings of words found in his work alone, or almost alone, or first, is a considerable one. His grammar, too, has character, the extension of constructions by analogy being very common in him, and he carries the omission of verbs to extreme lengths.

Claudian and Sidonius imitate the *Thebais*, the grammarians from Servius onward quote from both epics. Statius held an influential position in the Middle Ages, witness the part he plays in the closing cantos of the *Purgatorio*. Joseph of Exeter used the *Achilleis* in his *Trojan War*; Rabelais refers to it. As for the *Thebais* Chaucer knows Thiodamas and a gest that told how 'bisshop Amphiorax fil thurghe the ground to helle,'¹ Tasso has many reminiscences, one of the vine-and-elm simile which concludes

par che sen dolga, e più che'l proprio fato
di lei gl' incresca che gli more a lato,²

and so have early dramatists, Garnier, for instance, whose *Antigone* is a medley of Seneca, Sophocles and Statius. Racine himself borrows in his *Thébaïde*, and it is hard to believe that Milton's

So much the rather thou, celestial light,
Shine inward and the mind thro' all her power
Irradiate: there plant eyes³

owes nothing to the words of Tiresias, 'God whelmed mine eyes in gloom, and gathered all the light to my

¹ *Troilus and Criseyde*, ii. 103 sqq.

² *Ger. Lib.* 20. 99.

³ *Paradise Lost*, 3. 51 sqq., *Theb.* 4. 542 sqq.

mind.' There are other passages in *Paradise Lost* that look like reminiscences. Pope translated the first book of the *Thebais* when only fifteen, Gray sends West a spirited version of the quoit episode of Book Six. One would like to know how Chateaubriand in his *Martyrs* came by a lion simile directly translated from Statius.¹

With Silius I can be brief: his muse was, as Pliny recognized, industrious rather than inspired.² He is not even forcible: if he writes a simpler Latin than do the others, it is because shallow and level streams may well be clear. When not following a good model he is contemptibly feeble, so that a question as to the genuineness of a poor passage some eighty lines in length, found in no MS. and first included in the text by the Aldine of 1523,³ cannot be decided by the cursory glance that would discover the handiwork of Lucan, Valerius, or Statius. The work is not, however, entirely without interest. Literary characters, or their forbears, often appear as combatants in the battles. Ennius, of course, is there in his own right, but we meet also the father of the orator Laelius, and ancestors of Cicero and Asconius.⁴ The number of episodes to which tolerably close parallels cannot be found in previous epics is small, but among these is one thoroughly characteristic of the taste for animal stories to which I have referred before. A Roman's horse, recognizing its master among the wounded, throws the Carthaginian who is riding it as captive, and approaching the fallen man kneels down, as he

¹ *Theb.* 2. 675 sqq.

² *Ep.* 3. 7. 5 *scribebat carmina maiore cura quam ingenio.*

³ *Pun.* 8. 144 sqq.: see the article by W. E. Heitland, *Journal of Philology*, 1896.

⁴ *Pun.* 12. 393 sqq. (Ennius), 15. 453 sqq. (Laelius), 8. 404 sqq. (Tullius), 12. 212 sqq. (Pedianus).

has been trained to do, to be mounted by him.¹ A characteristic piece of pedantry is the scene in which Virtue and Pleasure reproduce the famous 'Choice of Hercules' for the benefit of the youthful Scipio.² There are many reminiscences of Livy, by no means confined to the third decade, which was presumably the poet's main source; Cicero, too, yields tribute in this way.

What our poet's contemporaries said of him we have already seen: the Silius whom Sidonius names is probably the same.³ One or two MSS. seem to have been extant in the ninth century, but literature knows his work again only after 1416 when Poggio or his friend Bartholomaeus unearthed a copy at St. Gall. Elyot in his *Governour*, Castiglioni in his *Cortegiano*, mention Silius without revealing the extent of their familiarity with his work; Montaigne occasionally quotes him; Dryden holds him worse writer, but more of a poet than Lucan;⁴ Addison (whose poetry, *pace* Macaulay, is very Silian) often cites and translates him in his *Remarks on Italy*, and one of these versions contains a line that may well be the original of Pope's 'pale ghosts' that 'start at the flash of day.'⁵ Gray read him in Piedmont, Coleridge never (he is ashamed to say⁶): Macaulay revenged a labour that was not of love by scribbling 'Heaven be praised!' at the end of his copy and penning a criticism in the essay upon Addison.⁷

¹ *Pun.* 10. 454 sqq.

² *Pun.* 15. 18-128.

³ *Carm.* 9. 260.

⁴ Pref. to *Annus Mirabilis*.

⁵ *Rape of the Lock*, 5. 52, Sil. 12. 129 *interdumque nouo perturbat lumine manes*.

⁶ *Table-talk*, Sept. 2, 1833.

⁷ Two other writers of Epic, Serranus and Saleius Bassus are mentioned by Quintilian (10. 1. 89, 90) and Juvenal (7. 80); both died early after doing work that Quintilian reckons first rate, and Saleius was a friend of Julius Secundus of p. 131.

CHAPTER III

DRAMA

DRAMA never flourished at Rome, and the only forms of it now popular were the debased ones of Mime and Atellane play. The latter was a farce of some kind which began to receive literary treatment in Sullan times, and we hear a good deal of it in our period, chiefly because of the habit audiences had of finding in the dialogue allusions of an uncomplimentary character to the emperor.¹ Caligula, indeed, burned in the arena an author who had made a joke that could be construed in a treasonable sense.² As for the Mime, Augustus was true to the spirit of his time when he turned on his deathbed and asked his friends if he had played well the *mime* (not the *comedy*) of life : ³ to the empire these sketches from everyday life, with their immorality seasoned by an abundance of wise and moral sayings,⁴ stood for comedy. The fragments of both classes of work are too meagre to detain us here. In legitimate Comedy, only dilettante work was done : the plays of Virgilius Romanus, for instance, much admired by the younger Pliny, must have been like the Latin comedies written at one time by junior fellows at Cambridge for presentation on the occasion of some great personage's visit.⁵ Nor was Tragedy much better off. One would, indeed, be tempted to suppose that it too was entirely bookish, but for the attacks made in A.D. 47 by the theatre mob upon

¹ Suet. *Tib.* 45, *Ner.* 39, *Galb.* 13.

² Suet. *Cal.* 27.

³ Suet. *Aug.* 99. ⁴ For this ingredient see Sen. *Ep.* 8. 8 and 9.

⁵ Plin. *Ep.* 6. 21. 2 *sqq.*

the tragic poet Publius Pomponius Secundus, which must presumably have been connected with the public performance of one of his plays.¹ This man, having enjoyed the friendship of the eldest son of Sejanus, had been kept under observation during the latter part of Tiberius' reign,² but Caligula's accession revived his fortunes,³ and he not only held a consulship,⁴ but in A.D. 50 distinguished himself as general against the Germans, though his fame as a poet, remarks Tacitus, was far greater.⁵ Quintilian reckons him the best writer of tragedy he has seen, though older critics thought he lacked vigour.⁶ The prefaces in which he discussed with Seneca matters affecting the diction of tragedy⁷ were perhaps like those which Dryden prefixes to his plays. It appears that he wrote an *Aeneas*,⁸ one of those national dramas founded on some incident of Roman legend or history, and comparable somewhat to *Henry the Fifth* and *King John*, to which the Romans gave the name *praetexta*. It must have been rather difficult in plays of this kind to avoid writing something at which a suspicious emperor might take umbrage: even in an *Atreus* the introduction of the Euripidean tag *One must bear with one's ruler's folly* had helped to ruin Mamercus Scaurus under Tiberius.⁹ Yet they seem rather common in our period; under Vespasian an accomplished barrister named Curiatius Maternus produced

¹ Tac. *Ann.* II. 13.

² L.c. 5. 8.

³ Dio 59. 6. 2.

⁴ Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 7. 80 and Tac. II. 13 both call him *consularis*.

⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 12. 27, 28. He was a friend of the elder Pliny, who wrote his biography (see p. 161).

⁶ Quint. 10. 1. 98. *eorum quos uiderim longe princeps . . . , quem senes quidem parum tragicum putabant, eruditione ac nitore praestare confitebantur.*

⁷ Quint. 8. 3. 31 mentions a discussion as to the admissibility of the phrase *gradus eliminat*, which was conducted in this way.

⁸ Charisius in *Gramm. Lat.* I. p. 132.

⁹ See p. 129.

a *Cato* and a *Domitius*, based upon incidents of the civil wars of Caesar and Augustus respectively. Expressions put in the mouth of this writer in the *Dialogus* of p. 261 make it probable that these and other plays of his were written for reading rather than performance.¹

A few lines of Pomponius have survived, nothing from Curiatius. But the collection preserved to us under Seneca's name² provides us with complete specimens of Roman tragedy—the only ones we possess. Eight of the pieces are pretty certainly the work of the philosopher: the polished, epigrammatic Latin closely resembles his, the choruses are mostly verse diatribes on his favourite topics of ambition, simplicity and so forth, the dialogue often reproduces striking passages from his prose. The divergencies between them, or groups of them, in matters of language and metre are similar to those which exist between different dramas of Euripides or Shakespeare. The 'Frenzied Hercules,' 'Medea,' 'Oedipus' (the King), and 'Agamemnon' are loosely based on extant Greek tragedies bearing the same title; the 'Trojan Women' is an amalgam of the *Troades* and *Hecuba* of Euripides, the *Phoenissae* of Euripides and *Seven against Thebes* of Aeschylus are combined in the 'Phoenician Women,' which is however not a complete play, but merely two disconnected scenes. The models of the 'Phaedra'³ and 'Thyestes' are not

¹ *Dial. 3 si qua omisit Cato, sequenti recitatione Thyestes dicet . . . maturare libri huius editionem festino.*

² Quintilian too (9. 2. 8) cites, as put in the mouth of Medea by Seneca, a half line which occurs in a speech made by him in the *Medea* of our collection.

³ Only one of the two plays in which Euripides wrote upon this subject has reached us. From this the Senecan piece diverges so far (representing, for instance, the overtures to Hippolytus as

preserved. A 'Hercules on Oeta,' covering much the same ground as the *Trachiniae* of Sophocles, comes next in the collection, standing out from its predecessors by reason of its length, which exceeds the longest of them by 650 lines, and the unevenness of its style, passages of Senecan brilliance and eloquence lying embedded amidst slipshod Latin and feeble bathos. That something is wrong with the second half is generally recognized, but several critics believe that the first may come from the author of the other plays. As, however, it contains much rubbish, whilst the later portion is not wholly devoid of good stuff, I prefer to look upon the whole thing as an expansion by a very late author of some rough work of Seneca's which had somehow survived to his day.¹

As literature the plays are contemptible, substituting for action and emotion declamation and hysteria, for characterisation, psychological analysis, and full of morbid craving for the horrible and disgusting. Very characteristic in their disregard for probability are the duologues, in which each speaker, no matter what his standing, contributes a line or so, sometimes only a word, of epigram :

- NURSE. Stay thy passion mad,
My daughter. Scarce shall silence keep thee safe.
MEDEA. Fortune doth fear the brave and whelm the coward.
NURSE. Praise is to courage due, when it hath scope.
MEDEA. Never can courage be at loss for scope.
NURSE. No hope, when all is lost, can point a way.
MEDEA. He that can nothing hope, need nought despair.
NURSE. Colchis is far away, thy consort false :
Of all thy rich resources, none abides.

made, not by the nurse, but by the queen herself) that it is generally assumed that it is based on the other.

¹ See my article, *The Authorship of the Hercules Oetaeus*, *Class. Rev.* 1905.

MEDEA. Abides *Medea* : there you 've all the world,
And sword and fire, heaven and heaven's lightnings
too.

NURSE. One must a monarch fear.

MEDEA. My sire was one !

NURSE. Fear'st not their hosts ?

MEDEA. Not though from earth they spring !¹

NURSE. 'Tis death !

MEDEA. And welcome !

NURSE. Flee !

MEDEA. Nay, not again !²

As an instance of bad taste I take the fall of the curtain upon Theseus, piecing together the remnants of the mangled body of his son :

Ah, what is this
Shapeless and hideous, gashed about with wounds ?
Some part of thee it is, I know not what.
Here, here then let it go, not where it should,
But where there 's room ;³

of ranting, the outbursts of Hercules when he realizes that he has murdered his family, and Hippolytus when he finds his stepmother in love with him⁴—things to which, it must be owned, the plays owed much of their popularity with Elizabethan playwrights. It cannot, indeed, be denied that they contain some fine lines and thoughts, which great writers have not disdained to quote and develop, even some eloquent or pathetic passages. Really dramatic scenes are rare, but one in the *Troades*, much admired by

¹ A characteristic allusion to the earth-born warriors from whom she saved him at Colchis. So below 'again' involves a reference to her original elopement with Jason.

² *Med.* 157-170.

³ *Phaedr.* 1265 sqq.

⁴ *Herc. Fur.* 1202 *nunc parte ab omni, genitor, iratus tona | . . . stelliger mundus sonet, | flammisque et hic et ille iaculetur polus*, etc., *Phaedr.* 671 *magne regnator deum, | tam lentus audis scelera ? tam lentus uides ? | . . . omnis impulsus ruat | aether et atris nubibus condit diem !* The first half of the second passage is quoted, in the original Latin, in *Titus Andronicus*, iv. 1.

the modern imitators,¹ is worth reproducing here. Ulysses has come to fetch Hector's son for execution ; his mother, who has concealed the boy in his father's sepulchre, swears, with dramatic irony :

He's from the daylight gone, laid in the tomb,
Is with the dead, and all their dues hath had.²

Ulysses hurries away in delight, but suddenly checks himself :

But, soft ! the Greeks will take thy word, Ulysses :
Whose word hast thou ? A parent's : lie like that
No parent frames, omen so hideous scouting—
But they fear omens who've no worse to fear.
Yes, but she swore an oath—And if 'tis false,
What need she fear that's worse than she bears now ? . . .
(*watching the queen closely*)

She's sad, and weeps, and moans,
Yes, but still paces anxious to and fro
Catching, with ear alert, at all I say.
'Tis fear, not grief, she feels. I need my wits.
(*turning to her*)
Most parents in such case should one console
But thou art happy to have lost thy son,
Whose doom it was a bloody death to die
Flung from the last tower left of Troy's fallen walls.³

Andromache cannot repress a start, a word or two of horror. Ulysses again soliloquizes :

Trembling ! I'm on the track : her terror proves
She's still a mother. I must try again.
(*addressing his attendants*)
Come, scatter, men. Somewhere the mother's guile
Hath hid our foe, last peril of our race :
Quick : find his lurking-place and rout him out !
(*pretending to see the boy captured*)
Ha, good ! They have him. Quick, now, bring him here !
(*turning to Andromache, who has involuntarily stolen a glance towards the tomb*)

¹ *Tro.* 524 sqq.

² *L.c.* 599-604.

³ *L.c.* 607 sqq.

Why turn and tremble ? he is surely dead ?

ANDR. Would I did fear indeed ! 'Tis an old habit
And long-conned lessons are not soon forgot.¹

Ulysses now explains that it will be necessary to demolish the tomb and scatter the ashes of Hector. Andromache steels her heart to bear the indignity to her beloved dead, but as the work begins breaks into self-reproach :

What art thou doing ? Wilt in ruin whelm
Father and son ? May be the Greeks will hear thee—
A moment, and the massive tomb must crush
Him it now hides. O better anywhere
He died than there, for sire on son to fall
Or son on sire ! ²

And she makes a last appeal to Ulysses, answered with a brief, 'Render him up : then entreat !' In mournful anapaests she calls Astyanax forth—to be hurried off to death by his enemy, deaf alike to prayer and argument.³

In many MSS., though not those of the better family, the second *Hercules* is followed by a tenth tragedy which deals with the story of Nero's unhappy wife Octavia, and bears her name. The Latinity of the play is good, its style much more restrained than that of the others. Internal evidence shows that it was written after Nero's death,⁴ but it may well belong to our period. It is the only *praetexta* that has reached us—a fact which hardly makes amends for the poverty of its literary merit. The action starts with events immediately preceding the divorce, and ends with the rising of the populace in Octavia's

¹ L.c. 625 *sqq.*

² L.c. 686-691.

³ L.c. 691 *sqq.*

⁴ The lines in which Agrippina predicts the fall and death of Nero (629-631) fit the actual course of events too well not to be *post factum*.

favour, and Nero's order for her execution. The *dramatis personae* include, besides the two protagonists, Poppaea, the ghost of Agrippina, and Seneca himself. One of the choruses gives an interesting account of the famous attempt to drown Agrippina.¹

Seneca can hardly have intended his plays for the stage: his *Medea* has no qualms as to killing her children in full view of the audience.² It is just possible that they are 'plays with a purpose,' differing but in form from the author's essays on Anger and Clemency. The whole collection exercised a tremendous influence on the first beginnings of modern drama.³ In Italy, Mussato, Loschi, and Corraro wrote Latin plays modelled upon it and borrowing from it, and the first Italian tragedy, Camelli's *Filostrato e Panfila*, not content with making loans, puts its prologue in the mouth of Seneca. In the sixteenth century Trissino preferred the Greek models, but Cinthio's *Orbecche* returns to the Senecan ideal, which was by now strong also in England and France. Buchanan and Muret wrote in Latin, but in 1552 Jodelle's *Cleopâtre* introduced Seneca to the vernacular. Garnier continues the innovation, whilst in our own country *Gorboduc* owes the Latin poet its plan, *Gismond of Salerne* and *The Misfortunes of Arthur* some thoughts as well. Kyd's *Spanish Tragedie* with its Seneca scraps and borrowings leads us on to *Titus Andronicus* and early Shakespeare. Into further details I cannot go here, but must record the fact that the Tantalus who raves against the house of Pelops at the opening of the *Thyestes* develops, through a long line of plays

¹ Ll. 310 sqq.

² *Med.* 970, 1001.

³ See J. W. Cunliffe, *Early English Classical Tragedies* (Oxford, 1912).

beginning with Corraro's *Procne*, into the ghost of *Hamlet*. Corneille and Racine use the plays, even Alfieri is not uninfluenced by them.

The earliest quotation is a half line that has been scrawled on a wall at Pompeii : ¹ Quintilian cites another, ² whilst the epic writers borrow freely. Sidonius regards the playwright as distinct from the philosopher, speaking of *two* sons of Corduban followers respectively of Plato and Euripides. ³ But the bishop of Clermont is an inaccurate writer, who in this very passage makes Euripides scan as two trochees : he was perhaps misled by the fact that in the libraries of his day, where authors were classed as sacred or profane, the obviously heathen dramas were separated from the moral writings with which one naturally associated the name of the friend of St. Paul.

¹ Diehl, *Pomp. Wandinschr.* 809 (= *Agam.* 730).

² See p. 57².

³ *Carm.* 9. 232-234.

CHAPTER IV

VERSE SATIRE

THE name *satura* was applied by the Romans to more than one kind of literary product. It was first used to denote the earliest form of drama, a kind of dialogue play in verse, almost devoid of plot ;¹ then, when that died out, owing to the rise of regular comedy based on Greek models, Ennius seems to have given it to a new kind of composition,² of which, however, we know little more than that it was intended for reading, not acting. With Lucilius, the contemporary of the younger Scipio, we get a writer of *satura* as to whose conception of its functions it is possible to speak more precisely. His fragments make up a volume considerably larger than a book of the *Aeneid* and, brief, disconnected, and accidentally preserved as the items are, leave us with a fairly definite impression of something that, save that it was written in verse (only predominantly hexameter), was not unlike Montaigne's *Essais* or Addison's *Spectator*. The topics are as varied, their treatment as desultory, as one would expect to find in a descendant of the plotless medley of early Republican times : nevertheless, the prevalence of *causeries* on literary, philosophical, and artistic matters, sketches from everyday life, delineation of human

¹ Liv. 7. 2. 4 *sqq.*

² Quintilian (9. 2. 36) and Gellius (2. 29. 20) enable us to get some idea of the contents.

weaknesses in general and the experiences of the poet in particular is distinctly marked. The invective, the outspokenness upon political matters remind us, as they reminded Horace,¹ of the old Aristophanic comedy, but this is certainly not the model of Lucilius in the sense that Greek epic and tragedy were the models of Virgil and Ennius. Varro, on the other hand, the next satirist whose work has reached us (unfortunately only in fragments), has, by calling his pieces *Menippean* satires, proclaimed himself an imitator. The writings of the Cynic Menippus of Gadara are entirely lost to us, but we may fairly assume that certain distinctive features of Varronian satire which reappear to a greater or less degree in the work of another rival of the Gadarene's, Lucian of Samosata, were due to their influence. I have already had occasion ² to refer to the lightness and grace of the tone of the Varro fragments. Philosophy is a prominent feature; indeed, the pictures from life and gossip on literature and art are perhaps generally only incidental. There are two striking peculiarities of form. Both prose and verse are employed, sometimes in the same piece, and there is a tendency to give a piece a narrative or dramatic setting.³ In Horace, whose work in this direction, composed exclusively in hexameters, has reached us complete, we find much the same subjects as in Lucilius, save that the Augustan naturally avoids politics. The tone is one of gentlemanly, good-natured raillery, the leading virtues are delicacy of touch and insight into character. As Lucilius suggests Aristophanes, so

¹ *Sat.* I. 4. 6.

² See p. 16.

³ See Mommsen's interesting (and imaginative) account of the fragments, *History of Rome*, v. 12.

Horace Menander, but the only branch of Greek literature to which he is really indebted is the *diatribe*, that popular discourse, sermon, on moral philosophy, which originated with the Stoics and Cynics, and of which Teles is perhaps the best-known exponent. The *diatribe* can, however, hardly count as one of Horace's models, whereas its influence upon the first satirist of our period, Persius, was as powerful as that of Menippus seems to have been upon Varro.

Of Aulus Persius Flaccus our MSS. preserve an account that claims to come from the commentary of Valerius Probus.¹ Born in A.D. 34, at Volaterrae, in an equestrian family, he lost his father at the age of six, was brought six years later to Rome, and presently learned philosophy from the Stoic Cornutus. With another Stoic, a relation of his by marriage, the Thræsea Paetus of Tacitus' *Annals*, he travelled, whilst the list of his friends includes the names of Seneca, Lucan, Caesius Bassus, and Servilius Nonianus.² To an attractive exterior he joined a tranquil, modest disposition, and showed affectionate devotion to the women of his family. The perusal of Lucilius' tenth book set him writing satires, but before he had completed the sixth he was struck down by death, at the age of twenty-eight. Cornutus seems to have taken charge of his literary remains, but to have handed over to Bassus the task of editing what was deemed worthy of publication.³

Even in the first satire, where it might be thought that Persius is simply ridiculing a fashionable craze, closer inspection teaches us that he is really proving

¹ For whom see p. 254.

² For the two last-named see pp. 96 and 157.

³ *Leuiter correxit (librum) Cornutus et Caesio Basso petenti ut ipse ederet tradidit edendum*, says the *Vita*.

that bad morals mean bad literature—the standpoint of Seneca in the 114th of his *Moral Letters*: the other satires are simply and frankly Stoic diatribes in verse, and their best commentary those same letters of Seneca—which indeed they somewhat closely resemble, not merely in doctrine and methods of illustration, but also in the looseness of the tie between each piece and its addressee, and in the shadowy vagueness of the imaginary interlocutor. In this last point, legacy from the diatribe, where a perfunctory ‘says he’ is the regular phrase for introducing objections, Persius naturally suffers by comparison with a master of dialogue like Horace. The subjects of these five satires are: the proper objects of prayer; the need for philosophy as the guide for life, the medicine of moral disease; the folly of neglecting self-knowledge and accepting the valuation of the crowd; the real meaning of liberty; the right use of wealth. A fourteen-line poem, written in ‘limping’ iambics, on the theme ‘No poet inspired am I: ’tis to earn my bread that I write’—not very intelligible in view of the easy circumstances in which the author ‘seems to have lived’—precedes in some MSS., in others follows, the satires proper, written in hexameters.

Although Persius is most unambitious in the matter of vocabulary, and revels in the use of colloquialisms such as most literary writers deemed beneath the dignity even of prose,¹ his obscurity is greater than that of any Latin author outside the period of absolute decay. For this his favourite use of metaphor is

¹ Typical words that one might quote are *baro*, *bombi*, *ebullire* (in a slang sense), *exossatus*, *gluttu*, *lallare*, *mamma*, *nonaria*, *palpo* (subst.), *sanna*, *scloppo*.

largely responsible. That he often gains in force and loses little in clearness by this ornament one must freely admit. 'Listen while I pull your grandmothers (*i.e.* inveterate prejudices) out of your heart';¹ 'He's gone under—not so much as a bubble to show' (of one lost to shame);² 'His ears have been well soused in pungent vinegar'³ (so that he is proof against bad logic)—turns like these remind us of the best things in Carlyle and Meredith. But too often, as with those writers at times, the picture is blurred, the very point obscure. So the phrase 'kettle of speech,'⁴ applied by him to the style of the day, is by one editor interpreted 'hotch-potch,' by another as a reference to frothy bubblings. In other cases the general sense is clear enough, but we need the help of a commentator before we can grasp the particular allusion. When the thought 'Learning is no use if no one knows it to exist' takes the form 'What avails study, unless this leaven, this wild fig-tree that has struck root in the heart, breaks its way through?'⁵ and the editors remind us that the fig-tree has a remarkable capacity of forcing its way through the strongest obstacles, we begin to think of Browning, whose manner indeed is almost anticipated by such a line as

'Gainst wrong a theta black you've skill to prick,'⁶

where the meaning is 'You know how to prove an act immoral' and we must remember that a juror

¹ 5. 92 *dum ueteres auias tibi de pulmone reuello.*

² 3. 34 *alto|demersus summa rursus non bullit in unda.*

³ 5. 86 *aurem mordaci lotus aceto.*

⁴ 1. 80 *sartago loquendi.*

⁵ 1. 24 *nisi hoc fermentum et quae semel intus|innata est rupto iecore exierit caprificus?*

⁶ 4. 13 *potis es nigrum uitio praefigere theta.*

who wished to convict on a capital charge wrote on his voting tablet the initial *th* of the Greek word for death! Another thing that makes Persius hard to read is his clumsiness in the management of dialogue, in consequence of which we are often in doubt as to where one speaker leaves off and another begins. A typical instance is to be found in a passage of the first satire, where a few specimens of fashionable verse are followed by certain comments, and editors are by no means agreed on the question whether these represent the derision of Persius or the appreciation of his interlocutor.¹

Another weakness of our author's, and one particularly unfortunate for a satirist, is bookishness. Any reader of insight could evolve from these writings just the picture the biography draws of their author, a shy and earnest student, brought up with women relatives and philosophers, to whom life is represented by the lecture room and the library. His constant echoing of the thoughts and phrases of Horace, his borrowing from his satires of such typical characters as Pedius the barrister, Craterus the doctor, Natta the reprobate,² may be due to a convention similar to that which we have seen actuating the imitators of Virgil. It is quite possible he paid similar homage to Lucilius: the fragments of that writer present a considerable number of parallel passages. But there can be little doubt that Persius did lack inventive power. Brief as his work is, he manages to repeat himself a good deal, never wearying, for instance, of metaphors drawn from the carpenter's or house-builder's

¹ I. 92 *sqq.*

² Nerius (2. 14=Hor. 2. 3. 69), Craterus (3. 65=Hor. 2. 3. 161), Natta (3. 31=Hor. 1. 6. 124).

art,¹ and twice venting his resentment against the Philistine centurions.² When he is not simply versifying lecture notes or reproducing models, and it is a question of describing what he has actually seen, Persius is by no means without genius. Petronius himself could hardly have bettered his picture of the literary *salon* :

See, Rome's young bloods have dined, and o'er their wine
Ask what the news from Poesy divine,
And straight doth one in purple all bedight
Snuffling and lispng some poor trash recite,
Filtering and mincing in his foppish way
Phyllis, Hypsipyle—some dolorous lay.
Thunders applause. Is not the poet dead
Happy that hour? No lighter on his head
Weighs now the marble? All about his tomb
From the blest ashes will not violets bloom?
' 'Tis only fun, of course,' he says, 'you poke,
Carrying too far your penchant for a joke.
Is there a poet would deny he pines
To win the lips of men and leave some lines
Worthy in cedar-oil embalmed to be—
From fear of fish or spices ever free?'³

My feigned interlocutor, I admit
That when on something superfine I hit
(A Phoenix rare, I grant, but when I do)
I don't shun praise. I'm flesh and blood like you.
My point is this. Your 'fine!' and your 'bravo!'
Are not the farthest excellence can go. . . .
You keep a table where choice dainties smoke,
Can fling a shivering friend a cast-off cloak,
And then 'Plain Truth's the apple of my eye:
Tell me the truth about myself!' you cry.
How can the thing be done? But still, I'll try.
*Bald-pate, whose paunch a good half yard before
Stands out, 'tis trash you write, and nothing more!*⁴

¹ See 3. 52, 4. 12, 5. 25 and 38.

² 3. 77 (*gente hircosa centurionum*), 5. 189.

³ A characteristic echo of Horace, who in *Ars Poet.* 332 mentions the use of cedar resin to preserve books from decay, and in *Ep.* 2. 1. 269 alludes to the passing of unreadable books to that quarter of the city 'where they sell incense, perfumes, pepper—everything for which dull literature can serve as wrapper.'

⁴ 1. 30-57.

There is much vigour, too, in the picture of the patient who lacks strength of mind to carry out the doctor's advice to 'go slow'—

Suppose his pulse by the third evening mend :
To some great mansion he'll a flagon send
(One with a decent swallow) and a line
To say, before his bath he'd like some wine.
'My friend, you're pale,' 'Tis nothing.' 'Still, take care :
Your skin, you know—perhaps you're not aware
How puffed it is, and yellow?' 'Yellow! why,
Your own is ten times worse: you needn't try
To come the guardian o'er me. Many a year
Has *he* been dead—but you, you still are here.'
'Oh, very well: I've nothing more to say.'
So to the bath our patient wends his way. . . .
But shivers seize him, drinking as he stands,
And dash the steaming tankard from his hands. . . .
Tapers and funeral march must be the end :
On lofty bed they lay our poor dear friend,
Where with coarse ointments daubed and plastered o'er
Stark heels and stiff he turns towards the door—
Till his knaves come to carry him away,
Wearing the freedman's cap, Romans since yesterday.¹

An exceptionally simple piece of writing, which nevertheless is full of force, is the passage in which Persius protests against the wickedness of many a prayer that is only whispered—

Come, say now—'tis not much I would be told,—
What views about Jove's character you hold.
D'ye think he's better than—well, Staius, say ?
Ah, you're not sure, and hesitate. But, pray,
Could you name better judge the bench to sit,
For guardianship of orphan one more fit ?
Well, now, this prayer with which you boldly ply
The ears of Jupiter on Staius try.
'Oh, Jove! O gracious Jove!' he'll soon exclaim.
And Jove himself—won't *he* invoke his name ?
If, when it thunders, 'tis an oak that's riven
Not you and yours, deem you that all's forgiven ? ²

¹ 3. 90-106.

² 2. 17-25.

There is surely eloquence in these lines :

Father of Heaven Almighty, in such wise
 Be pleased the bloody tyrants to chastise :
 Let them by passions venom'd fever tossed
 See Virtue and turn sick to know her lost.
 The roaring bull of Sicily, the sword
 That hung from gilded vault o'er royal board,
 What terrors hold they, that dread thought beside
Down, ever down, in headlong fall I glide !
 Or ghastly symptoms that but inly show,
 Whereof the dearest wife must never know ?¹

But perhaps the most attractive passage is that in which the poet tells the story of his relations with Cornutus : it happens also to serve to illustrate the boldness of his metaphors—

We are alone, Cornutus : in thy hands
 I put my heart (for so the Muse commands)
 For scrutiny. 'Tis pleasant to declare
 How great in mine own soul, dear friend, thy share.
 Sound it : the ring will solid brick disclose,
 Not varnished lath and plaster of mere pose.
 Well may I then a hundred tongues request
 To tell how deep ensconced within my breast
 Thou liest, and thoughts unutterable reveal
 That my heart's inmost depths as yet conceal.

When, timid boyhood gone, mine amulet
 Was to the fold-girt housegods dedicate,²
 When fawning slaves and manhood's snowy gown
 Gave mine eyes leave to rove o'er all the town,
 When doubtful grows the way, and ignorance blind
 With branching roads confronts the faltering mind,
 Then I, Cornutus, you my guardian make,
 To your Socratic breast my youth you take.
 Your inobtrusive gauge at once detects
 Each warp in morals and the same corrects.

¹ 3. 35-43.

² The *bullæ*, a ball worn by freeborn boys as a protection against the evil eye, seems to have been hung up by them, on the assumption of the garb of manhood, near the shrine of the Lares. These gods were represented as wearing the toga in what was called the Gabian mode, the special point of which consisted in the drawing of a fold round the body to serve as a girdle.

My mind defeat at reason's hands desires,
 And plastic features 'neath thy touch acquires.
 With you I watch the long day fade in gloom
 Or for the banquet pluck night's early bloom.
 On toil and rest the self same hours we spend,
 O'er the same simple board our cares unbend.
 Surely our lives are linked by some fixed law,
 And from one guiding star their courses draw.¹

The biography relates that the satires quickly became the rage, Probus deemed them worthy of a commentary from his pen, Quintilian praises them,² the Fathers quote them, and we actually possess some fifty lines of the first satire (along with a corresponding portion of Juvenal) in a Bobbio MS. written about the end of the fourth century. The Middle Ages affected Persius, and his text has reached us in a very good state of preservation. Of modern satirists Hall and Marston knew him, the latter complaining of him as a 'crabby' writer, whose 'jerks' are 'dusky'; Boileau has some unmistakable echoes, and Dryden translated him. Quotations abound in writers like Petrarch, Montaigne, Jonson, Jeremy Taylor, and Burton, who, it may be observed, claims to have the 'girlish bashfulness' which the biography attributes to our author. Milton parodies the limping iambics so that they may apply to Salmasius, Cowley is sure that Persius is no good poet if S. L. cannot understand him, Johnson stops Goldsmith's apology for the meanness of his chambers with a Persian tag. Mommsen's description of him as the beau ideal of a conceited and uninspired student poet represents the average view of modern times : ³ perhaps the last critic of importance to vouchsafe praise was Coleridge,

¹ 5. 21-46.

² Quint. 10. 1. 94 *multum et verae gloriae quamuis uno libro meruit.*

³ *History of Rome* i. 15.

who finds in him 'many passages of exquisite felicity,' a vein of thought 'manly and pathetic.'¹

To a satirist named Turnus, whom his contemporary Martial and later writers mention,² was at one time assigned a passage of some thirty lines published by the elder Balzac in his *Entretiens* 'from an old MS.' It is practically certain that they were the discoverer's own composition, so that two hexameters quoted by the scholia on Juvenal³ are all that remains to us of the work of this writer.

The MSS. of Decimus Iunius Iuvenalis present us with a dozen lives of the poet: unfortunately they are all at variance with each other, and there is only one upon which even partial reliance can be placed. This says nothing as to his birthplace or the dates of his birth and death, but avers that he was the son, or the foster-child, of a rich freedman, and started writing satire after middle age, having till then practised declamation—as a hobby rather than as an exercise. Some of this tallies with the fact that the poet himself speaks of youth as a thing long past,⁴ and Martial, thrice mentioning him in publications of A.D. 92 and A.D. 102,⁵ makes no reference to his verse, but does once apply to him the epithet *eloquent*. But the *pièce de résistance* of this life is very indigestible. The poet, we read, shrank at the outset from making his work widely known: later on, however, he became famous, and then it was that he inserted in a new satire, the seventh of those we possess, three lines from

¹ *Table-talk*, Sept. 2, 1833.

² Mart. 11. 10. 1, Rutil. Namat. 1. 604, Sidon. *Carm.* 9. 266.

³ On 1. 71.

⁴ 11. 201 *spectent iuvenes*]. . . *nostra bibit uernum contracta cuticula solem*: cp. 1. 25.

⁵ 7. 24 and 91 (*facunde* . . . *Iuuenalis*), 12. 18.

one of the early, little-known ones, directed against Domitian's favourite actor Paris. It so happened that just then an actor was once more popular at court, and Juvenal was suspected of having alluded to the fact. His punishment took the form of a compliment, and he was sent, at eighty years of age, to command a remote outpost in Egypt, where he soon died of chagrin and boredom. There seems to be a germ of truth in all this: the poet himself once implies that he has been in Egypt;¹ Malalas, in the sixth century, says that *Domitian* banished Juvenal to *Cyrenaica* (which adjoined Egypt) for a hit at his partiality for Paris,² and Sidonius, in the fifth, refers to a poet who suffered exile through giving offence to an actor.³ But the details are full of difficulty. Who was this emperor—not, presumably, Domitian—who idolized a player? Could a military post of this kind be given an octogenarian? How is it the three lines fit so well their present place?⁴ One turns in despair to the satires themselves. In the third, the words *your Aquinum*, which occur in some remarks addressed to Juvenal by a friend,⁵ suggest that he was born in that town, and the scholia tell us that some authorities definitely said this. An inscription recording the fact that a Junius Juvenal did, about our Juvenal's time, dedicate an offering in a temple of Ceres that stood near Aquinum and is actually coupled with it in the passage just mentioned, lends some support to this hypothesis.⁶ In Satire Fifteen

¹ 15. 44 *horrida sane | Aegyptos, sed luxuria, quantum ipse notavi, | barbara famoso non cedit turba Canopo.*

² Chron. 10 p. 341 Chilm.

³ Carm. 9. 271 sqq.

⁴ 7. 90-92.

⁵ 3. 319.

⁶ C. I. L. 10. 5382. The identification of this man with the poet is now in bad odour: there may well have been other *Iunii Iuvenales* living in the neighbourhood. He had been a soldier, and it is not

Juvenal speaks of a man who was consul in A.D. 127 as 'lately consul,'¹ must therefore, at any rate, have survived that year. Nowhere is there a hint to suggest publication under Domitian. Three of the five satires which constitute Book One presuppose the tyrant's death,² the sixth (Book Two) contains a passage that can scarce have been written before A.D. 115,³ in Book Five the thirteenth purports to belong to A.D. 127,⁴ and the fifteenth we have just seen to fall later than that year. It looks, in fact, as if the order of the books is that of their composition.

The first satire is introductory: the poet rejects the stale themes of epic and tragedy: the vice of the age inspires him with indignation to which he must give vent. But he is going to be cautious and attack only the dead—

INTERLOCUTOR. Aeneas 'gainst bold Turnus you can send:

No one takes umbrage at Achilles' end,
Or that long quest for Hylas at the well
What time he followed where his pitcher fell.
But when Lucilius, all his soul ablaze,
Draws, as it were, his sword and furious bays,
Then one whose conscience shivers, though his breast
Be scalding hot with sins yet unconfessed,
Feels his cheeks redden: this it is that fires
Resentment fierce, 'tis this their tears inspires.
So ponder well, before the trumpets bray:
The helmet donned, 'tis late to rue the fray.

JUVENAL. So be it then: my hand on them I'll try
'Neath Latin or Flaminian road that lie.⁵

The second satire deals with the seamiest side of easy to believe that the writer of Satire Sixteen had. Of course, if he had, the story of the Egyptian command becomes a shade less improbable.

¹ L. 27.

² *Sat. 1 passim, 2. 29 sqq., 4. 153.*

³ L. 407 must allude to the comet of that year.

⁴ The imaginary interlocutor has passed his sixtieth year, and was born in 67 A.D. (see ll. 16, 17).

⁵ I. 162-171.

Roman morals. In the third Umbricius, removing to the country, descants upon the drawbacks of life in the capital—the impossibility of competing with foreign immigrants, the power of money, the noise and dangers.

Conceive a witness of such honesty
As marked the famous host of Cybele,
Call Numa up, or him that once brought aid
To Pallas, 'midst her temple's flames dismayed :
'Tis to his income straight will turn the quest ;
His character—that's the last thing to test.
' What servants does he keep ? What acreage own ?
How many courses make his table groan ? '
The cash you've in your coffers put away
Measures the faith men give to what you say.
By Samothracian altars you may swear,
And Roman too : little, they deem, you care
For thunderbolts and gods, poor folk like you
(And Heaven itself deems not its vengeance due).
Again, what cause he gives for merriment
This same poor man, with cloak all soiled and rent,
And shabby clothes, when open gapes a shoe
Or shows fresh patches, neither neat nor few.
This is vile poverty's unkindest cut
Man to his fellow-man it makes a butt. . . .

'Tis hard for worth to rise in any home
Where means are cramped, but hardest here at Rome.
Quite despicable quarters cost a deal,
So do slaves' rations and the plainest meal.
Off common ware you blush to eat, and yet
Were you this moment 'mongst the Marsi set
Or at some Sabine board, 'twere well enough.
Why, you'd not scorn a smock frock, green and rough.
In many parts—if truth be but avowed—
None dons a toga till he needs a shroud,
And when returns upon some gala day
To grass-grown theatre the favourite play
And the pale mask with ghastly grin alarms
The farmer's infant in its mother's arms,
Stalls and pit dress alike : not e'en the mayor
More than white blouse to mark his state will wear.

At Rome, we 've smartness that our means exceeds
 And sometimes draw the balance o'er our needs
 From other's store. You see 't where'er you go,
 This foible—poverty that still must make a show.¹

The fourth satire describes the assembling and deliberations of a council summoned by Domitian to discuss the proper method of cooking a monster turbot with which he has been presented, the fifth, the insulting treatment of the dependent by his patron when he is at last deemed worthy of an invitation to dinner. The sixth attains a length of some 700 lines, nearly twice that of the longest of the others, and presents, in the form of a warning against marriage addressed to a friend who is contemplating it, a satirical picture of various types of women—the heiress who claims absolute independence, the perfect woman, with whom mere man finds life difficult, the woman who punctuates her conversation with Greek phrases, the athletic woman, the woman who knows the latest news and the most piquant scandal, the blue-stocking, the *dévoté* and others.² Satire Seven laments the inadequacy of the remuneration received by members of the learned professions. The lot of the teacher of rhetoric is vigorously depicted :

Rhetoric d' ye teach ? Then iron nerves you need
 When at your class's hands the tyrants bleed.³ . . .
 The wretched master's ears the singsong fills,
 His cabbage diet, that ne'er varied kills.
 What plea will serve, the pivot of the case,
 The category where it finds a place,
 The things the other side is sure to say—
 This all would know, but none the fee would pay.

¹ 3. 137-153, 164-183.

² 6. 136 *sqq.*, 166 *sqq.*, 184 *sqq.*, 246 *sqq.*, 398 *sqq.*, 434 *sqq.*, 511 *sqq.*

³ The reward to be received by a man who had assassinated a tyrant was often the theme of a *controuersia* (see p. 257).

' What have I learned, that you a fee should claim ? '
 ' Oh yes, of course : 'tis I must take the blame
 If there's no throb of genius in a lout
 Whose rantings stun my brain, week in week out—
 Whatever Hannibal must needs decide,
 Whether from Cannae straight on Rome to ride,
 Whether to rain and thunderbolts to yield
 And march his dripping regiments off the field.¹
 Ask what you will, it's yours if you his dad
 Can coax as oft as I to hear the lad.'
 Sextettes of teachers sing this tale of woe,
 To law constrained in earnest now to go.
 The brutal ravisher, the cup that slays,
 The man that wife's devotion ill repays,
 The drugs that vision long since lost restore ²—
 All this, in silence sunk, is heard no more.³

Satire Eight is almost philosophical enough for
 Persius : its theme, *Virtue the only true nobility*, is that
 of a letter of Seneca's. There is a striking reference
 to Marius and Cicero :

Cethegus, Catiline ! Could any claim
 A nobler stock than that of which you came ?
 And yet, as though your sires were trousered Gauls,
 You plan by night to storm and fire our walls,
 Dare deeds that well the fiery shirt might earn
 Wherein incendiaries are put to burn.
 The consul checks you : ne'er he seems to tire,
 Arpinum's upstart : this mere country squire
 All o'er the startled city sets his guard
 Armed to the teeth, on all seven hills toils hard.
 So there at home his plain civilian gown
 Won him as great a name, as fair renown
 As could Octavian's ever-dripping sword
 At Actium or Philippi bring its lord.
Parent and Country's Father both may be,
 But Rome hailed Cicero thus when she was free.

Another scion of that self-same soil
 Used as a ploughman hired at first to toil.
 Enlisting then, if slow to wield the pick
 In trenching, oft he felt the sergeant's stick.

¹ These four lines refer to *suasoria* themes.

² The allusion here is to *controuersia* themes.

³ 7. 150-170.

Yet, when the Cimbrians come and Rome's dismayed,
 In danger's crisis he alone brings aid.
 So, when the crows are flocking o'er the sky,
 Bound for the plain where piled-up Cimbrians lie
 (On corpses ne'er they lit of ampler size),
 His highborn colleague takes but second prize.¹

The ninth satire is as unsavoury as the second, the next elaborates the theme of Persius' second, the folly of the average man's prayer, and is the original of Johnson's *Vanity of Human Wishes*. Satire Eleven, couched in the form of an invitation to dinner, attacks the gluttony of the day and extols the simple table of old times. Twelve opens with a sacrifice in honour of a friend's escape from a storm at sea: after some account of this last, the skilful remark, 'My friend has children, so I can have no ulterior object in paying him this tribute,'² enables the poet to pass into a tirade against the prevalent vice of legacy-hunting. In Satire Thirteen a friend is rebuked for taking overmuch to heart the treachery of a friend who denies all knowledge of money which he has deposited in his charge. 'Tis so common an experience: an honest man's as rare a miracle as a mule in foal. The offender's conscience, the most merciless of torturers, will avenge you.'³ Fourteen is mainly pedagogic, enforcing the influence which parental example exercises on the child; at the end⁴ Juvenal draws a perfectly general picture of the troubles in which the pursuit and maintenance of wealth involves men. The fifteenth starts like a Senecan letter, with a piquant incident—a sanguinary battle between two Egyptian tribes: the cannibalism perpetrated by the victory affords a transition to a

¹ 8. 231-253.

³ 13. 60 *sqq.*, 192 *sqq.*

At ll. 93 *sqq.*

'From ll. 126 onwards.

general protest against man's bloodthirstiness, in which the voice of diatribe is unmistakable.¹ We end with a piece depicting, from the civilian point of view, the happy lot of the soldier, and ending abruptly at line sixty. Our best MS. apparently at one time contained more, if not the whole of it.

The defects of Juvenal's work are obvious and serious. His refusal to attack the living suggests a detachment from the present almost as fatal for satire as that from reality proved for declamation, and certainly incompatible with the prolonged scream of his indignation. And just as one ought not to be so angry at the shortcomings of bygone times, so one ought not, being so angry, to have time to indulge in some encyclopaedic digression on a theme but remotely connected with the matter in hand—as Juvenal often does, though seldom so impudently as where, after having occasion to refer to the legacy-hunters' way of vowing to sacrifice a hundred oxen in case of their patron's recovery, he throws in the remark, 'And were elephants to be bought in Rome, they would offer a hundred of *them*,' simply, it would appear, to introduce an eight-lined excursus on *elephants and their places of provenance*.² Such ill-timed learning reminds us of Lucan and his brother epics, and so does the tendency to overdraw, of which I must again content myself with a single instance—the picture of a common forge, with 'coals and tongs and anvil and smoke' presided over by a blacksmith father 'half blind with soot from the glowing metal,'³ with which Juvenal adorns his point that Demosthenes

¹ See esp. ll. 131 sqq.

² 12. 101 sqq.

³ 10. 130 *quem pater ardentis massae fuligine lippus | a carbone et forcipibus gladiosque paranti | incude et luteo Vulcano ad rhetora misit.*

would have done well to repress ambition and stay in his father's sword factory. He has not much more sense of humour than Persius, but is unfortunately more prone to indulge it. A typical example is the anti-climax with which he ends a passage in which he argues that as a matricide Orestes had a much better case than Nero. 'Orestes revenged his father, he didn't kill his sister or his wife or poison his relations—

Orestes ne'er appeared at music hall
Or in an epic told of Ilion's fall.¹

All the same, Juvenal has always been a favourite with lovers of forcible writing and students of humanity. Of the vigour of his pen I hope the specimens already quoted from his work will be able in spite of all the imperfections of translation to give the reader some idea. Many of his epigrams and maxims have become proverbial in the literature of modern Europe, largely, I think, because they are expressed in that terse, emphatic form which we are apt to accept as virtual proof of the truth or propriety of a saying. They submit very unwillingly to the ordeal of transplantation, and my attempt to reproduce a few in English dress is made with but too acute a consciousness of its inadequacy. At its best, the English iambic is a poor substitute for the rolling, Lucretian hexameter of Juvenal—

Virtue's admired—and shivers with the cold.
None in a moment e'er grew wholly vile.
There's nothing costs a man less than his son.

* Breath before honour deem it sin to choose
And for mere living's sake life's motives lose.
Heaven loves man more than man doth love himself.
Indulgence rare to pleasures lendeth zest.

¹ 8. 220, 221.

* This by his crime the noose, that earns the throne.

Revenge delights the small, weak, paltry mind.

He that plots secret crime his soul within
Is straightway guilty of the actual sin.

'Tis unto children most respect is due.

* How you 've got rich, none cares : rich you must be.

No man's contented just so much to sin
As you may license him.

* Ne'er Nature this and Reason that asserts.¹

Those who can distinguish the personality of a writer from the dress with which the fashion of the day invests him will see no reason to believe that these are the sayings of a mere copy-book moralist, a phrase-monger. But the main secret of the popularity which the satires have enjoyed is almost certainly to be found rather in the magnificent panorama of Rome's everyday life which they present to their readers. No Golden Age writer approaches Juvenal in this respect : of the two Silver authors who do, Martial, handling the same subjects, gives us but hasty sketches and impressions, whilst the younger Pliny is obviously inferior in range to the painter of the street scenes of Satire Three, the portraits of Four and Six, the *Patron's Banquet* of Five, the *Aristocrat Gladiator* of Eight, the *Fall of Sejanus* of Ten.

The scholia contain matter that suggests a commentary on the satires such as is not likely to have been composed long after their appearance. But there is no sign of their influence upon literature until the fourth century, when Ammian testifies to their

¹ The references, in the order of the text, are : 1. 74 ; 2. 83 ; 7. 187 ; 8. 83, 84 ; 10. 350 ; 11. 208 ; 13. 105 ; 13. 189, 190 ; 13. 209, 210 ; 14. 47 ; 14. 207 ; 14. 233, 234 ; 14. 321. The asterisk denotes that the original is a complete line or distich.

popularity in certain circles,¹ the poets Ausonius, Prudentius, and Claudian imitate them, Lactantius and Servius cite them, and the latter's pupil Nicaeus produces an edition.² To this period is generally assigned the Bobbio MS. of p. 73. No other dates earlier than the ninth century. It was in one belonging to the eleventh, now preserved at Oxford, that E. O. Winstedt in 1899 discovered a passage of thirty-four lines and a distich which belong to Satire Six, and though found in no other known MS. are unquestionably Juvenal's work.³ In the Middle Ages our poet is much read, enjoying especial honour as one of the *ethici* or moral writers. Chaucer's

O Juvenal lord, soth is thy sentence
That litel witen folk what is to yerne ⁴

refers to Satire Ten. Later on, the satirists, like Hall and Marston, Regnier and Boileau, know him well: the latter's first and tenth satires following closely the Roman's third and sixth. D'Aubigné, who has more of Juvenal's spirit than any of the others, avoids direct borrowing. The translation which bears Dryden's name contains only five versions direct from his pen. Pope draws inspiration from these and the original, which naturally gives the *Spectator* many texts. Johnson's *London* and *Vanity of Human Wishes* are free adaptations of Satires Three and Ten. Byron shows some knowledge of the satires, noting in *Don Juan* that Egeria's spring has recovered the natural charms of which 'modern improvements' had deprived it in Juvenal's time and echoing the first in the early parts of *English Bards*.

¹ Ammian. Marcell. 28. 4. 14.

² The *subscriptions* of two MSS. testify to it.

³ E. O. Winstedt, *A Bodleian MS. of Juvenal*, in *Class. Rev.* 1889.

⁴ *Troilus and Criseyde*, iv. 197, 198.

CHAPTER V

LIGHT AND MISCELLANEOUS VERSE

§ 1. *The Fable*

THE MSS. style Phaedrus 'freedman of Augustus': he himself, in his prologues and epilogues, tells us that he was born 'on Mount Pieria' ¹ (in Macedon), first published two books of fables which contained along with those usually ascribed to Aesop a number of more or less similar pieces of his own invention, ² was prosecuted (because of the interpretation put upon some of these) by Tiberius' favourite Seianus, ³ dedicated a third book of fables to one Eutychus ⁴ (generally identified with an influential charioteer of Caligula's times), and then went on to compose a fourth and fifth, ⁵ in which he became very independent of his Greek model. ⁶ Frequent references to malignant criticism and an exaggerated conception of his literary importance ⁷ mark Phaedrus out as a forerunner of some half-educated and self-conscious authors of modern times.

The fables that have reached us do not represent the whole of these five books. We miss the 'speaking

¹ 3 prol. 17.

² 2 prol. 9 *sqq.*, 3 prol. 38, 39.

³ 3 prol. 40 *sqq.*

⁴ 3 prol.

⁵ 4 prol. 1-3, 14, 15; 5 prol.

⁶ Cp. 4 prol. 11 *quas Aesopias, non Aesopi, nomino | quia paucas ille ostendit, ego pluris sero | usus uetusto genere sed rebus nouis, 5 prol. 1 Aesopi nomen sicubi interposuero | cui reddidi iam pridem quidquid debui | auctoritatis esse scito gratia.*

⁷ See 2 epil. 8 *quod si labori fauerit Latium meo | plures habebit quos opponat Graeciae*: cp. 3. 9. 3, 4; 4 prol. 15 *sqq.*; 4. 21.

trees,' which Phaedrus mentions as to be found in his work;¹ Books Two and Five are not half the length of the others. Some of what is lost may lie hidden in Perotti's fifteenth-century collection of fables 'from Aesop, Avianus, and Phaedrus,' which contains, along with thirty-two pieces that figure in our Phaedrus and thirty-six from Avianus, thirty-one that Perotti seems to have taken for the work of Aesop, but which read very like Phaedrus. Again, in the *Romulus* collection to be mentioned presently, there are fables which, in spite of the prose form in which they are now clad, show signs of having originally been written in verse, and exhibit certain characteristics of his.

Fabulari means simply 'to talk,' and 'tale' will cover all Phaedrus' *fabulae*, the first apparently to appear in Latin as an independent form of literary composition. They may be roughly classified as beast fables of the type with which we have been familiar from infancy, short anecdotes culminating in a moral apophthegm or witty (sometimes indecent) point, and narratives which, just as the flippant anecdotes remind us of Poggio's *Facetiae*, seem to contain the germ of the *conte* or short novel of the Decameron and La Fontaine. Whether or no all these categories were to be found in Aesop it is impossible to state with certainty: we know so little about the father of fable and his work. But we know a good deal about the 'first year course' in rhetorical schools, and, in view of the fact that 'Aesopian fables,' apophthegmatic anecdotes (*chriae*) and brief narratives were standing items therein,² may be pardoned for suspecting that Phaedrus got much of his inspiration out of his lecture note-books. That the more or less

¹ 1 prol. 5, 6.

² See Wilkins, *Roman Education*, p. 78.

licentious *conte* should take its rise from an educational source will surprise no one who remembers certain declamation themes and observes the skill with which Phaedrus finds some kind of moral for the most slippery of his stories. The account given in one of the pieces of how a suspicious husband, rushing into the darkness of his wife's chamber and there laying hold of a man's head, kills his innocent son, whom the mother, anxious to protect him from temptation, has given a bed in her own room, and how, on his at once committing suicide, she is charged with the murder, apparently, of both¹—this account has, as a matter of fact, much in common with the themes of more than one of the *controuersiae*. Another bears the title *The Rich and Poor Suitors*,² a point not without interest in view of the fact that the rich man and the poor man are standing figures of the declamations. The reader may care to see a version of this poem, which is one of Perotti's thirty-one pieces, and reads to me very like one of the tamer novels of the Decameron :

Two youths together once did woo a maid :
 But wealth the poor man's birth and looks outweighed.
 The lover, loth to see his rival wed,
 The day of marriage to his gardens fled.
 A little farther on than this retreat
 The rich man had a splendid countryseat,
 And as his house in town too cramped was thought
 Hither the bride, 'twas settled, should be brought.
 See, marshalled now at length, the train proceeds :
 Crowds gather round, and Hymen's flambeau leads.
 An ass, the poor man's only livelihood,
 There at the very gate convenient stood,
 This for the bride, for fear the journey tire
 Her dainty feet (it so falls out), they hire.
 Sudden the gales by pitying Venus sent
 Begin to rock the very firmament.

¹ 3. 10 : cp. Sen. *Contr.* 7. 5, Quint. *Decl. Mai.* 2.

² Perotti's *Addenda*, No. 14.

Loud peals of thunder every heart affright
 And massing rainclouds breed a dismal night.
 Hail 'midst the darkness scatters all the train
 Each for himself to find protection fain.
 With this, the ass begins a course to steer
 For the familiar home, that lay so near.
 Its safe arrival Brayings loud declare ;
 The slaves rush out, perceive its burden fair,
 And marvelling to their lord the tidings bear.
 He at a table with his friends was set
 Hoping in wine his passion to forget.
 A different man at their report he grew,
 From Bacchus and from Venus took his cue
 And wedded there, amidst the applauding crew.
 O'er all the town the maid her parents cried,
 And sore the groom was vexed to lose his bride.
 But every soul to whom the tale got known
 The choice that Heaven had made declared his own.

The specimen is rather a typical one. Phaedrus' Latin is neat and even graceful : no doubt he idealizes the everyday speech of educated Romans very much as La Fontaine that of Louis Fourteenth's courtiers. But he is very slipshod in constructional matters. The morals often fit their fables but ill ; *The Thief and the Lamp*,¹ of which he was perhaps the only begetter, has no less than three, all hopelessly far-fetched and inadequate. La Fontaine's praise of his brevity ignores the obscurity into which it so often leads him. In the *conte* just translated we are left to *infer* that the rich man was ugly and ill-born, the parents' choice, not the lady's, and it is not easy to see why the unsuccessful suitor should receive the distinctive title of *lover*. Is the *gate* that of the poor man's garden ? If so, the responsible party's consideration for the bride was rather belated, Phaedrus having taken pains to let us know that her goal was

not much farther on. If, on the other hand, it was the city gate, what was the poor man's ass doing there? The naïf story-teller can, of course, take many details of this kind for granted, but something more may surely be expected of the elegant *raconteur*. This curious combination of art and negligence is reflected even in the prosody of the iambics, which though otherwise constructed with all the polish and strictness that characterize the later treatment of this metre, nevertheless allow the spondee its old-fashioned privilege of appearing in any foot except the last.

All the same, the reader who turns to Phaedrus simply for entertainment will not be disappointed. Perhaps the best of all his stories is that of the misfortune that befel a flute-player named Princeps (prince).¹ This popular favourite, on his return to the theatre after an absence of some months brought about by an accident on the stage, hears, as he stands in the wings expecting an enthusiastic reception, the chorus singing :

Let fervent rapture every bosom thrill :

Rome is preserved : her *prince* is with her still.

The audience at once rises to its feet to do honour to the imperial house, but Princeps, who has never heard the song before, takes the words as a special tribute to himself and comes forward to take the curtain. The stalls grasp the situation and encore with vigour, whereupon the dupe commits himself so thoroughly that even the gallery realize what is happening, with the result that :

Poor Prince, his legs with garters circled white,
In snowy shirt and boots with pipeclay bright,
All flushed with honours for the emperor meant,
Into the streets is cast incontinent.

¹ 5. 7.

Seneca's reference to the Aesopian fable as virgin soil for Roman writers¹ seems to ignore Phaedrus. Martial's epithet *naughty*² implies appreciation only of part of his matter. Three or four hundred years later Avianus mentions his five books of fables,³ and about this time some of them were turned into prose and included in a collection of fables that bears the name of Aesop, though often called *Romulus* from an introductory letter which it contains, in which that monarch dedicates his 'translation from the Greek' to his son—Tiberinus! This collection, which is still extant, had much influence upon later fabulists, and seems for long to have superseded that of Phaedrus, which though known, as I had occasion to remark above, to Perotti, was not printed until 1576. Nearly a hundred years after La Fontaine, whose use of our author is by no means confined to the fables proper, Lessing included in his own fables some new versions of several Phaedrian ones, criticized in an essay some of the poet's weaknesses, and cherished hopes, not destined to be fulfilled, of some day editing him.

§ 2. *The Idyll*

The seven eclogues of Titus Calpurnius Siculus, with their allusions to a young, beautiful, eloquent ruler, a member of the Julian house,⁴ to a comet that

¹ *Consol. ad Polyb.* 8. 3 *Aesopeos logos, intemptatum Romanis ingeniis opus.* For a discussion of the questions raised by this passage, see J. P. Postgate, *Class. Rev.* 1919, pp. 19 sqq.

² *Mart.* 3. 20. 5 *improbi iocos Phaedri.*

³ In his introductory letter to Theodosius.

⁴ *I.* 44 *iuuenemque beata sequuntur|saecula maternis causam qui uicit Iulis, 7. 82 conspeximus ipsum|longius ac, nisi me uisus decepit, in uno|et Martis uultus et Apollinis esse putatur.*

announces an age of gold,¹ and to magnificent games,² must belong to the early years of Nero's reign. The Silver tendency to point and epigram is certainly not very conspicuous in them, but one could hardly ask for a better example of the verse that Persius pilloried, the verse of the armchair, elegant and polished, but devoid of all vigour and originality. Of the author we know nothing. It seems likely that his Corydon's debt to the powerful Meliboeus³ is, like that of Virgil's Tityrus, one which the poet himself seeks to acknowledge; but to identify the patron with Seneca or Calpurnius Piso is sheer caprice.

One or two passages echo Theocritus himself, but the general atmosphere is that of Virgil's *Bucolics*. Most of the names come thence, but the direct imitation of Virgil, which extends to the *Georgics*, is not very frequent or close. In the first poem two shepherds find carved on a tree a prophecy of the coming of a new age of gold: the author is supposed to be Faunus, but he has evidently read the famous Pollio eclogue. Next comes a singing match, in which a shepherd and a gardener sing in alternate four-line stanzas the praises first of their respective pursuits, then of their common mistress. Two lines in which Virgil has described the effect of the minstrelsy of Damon and Alpheisiboeus upon lynxes and rivers are here expanded into eleven. In Eclogue Three, Lycidas recounts to Iollas his estrangement from a mistress whom he has caught practising music with a rival. Counselling to open negotiations, he dictates a letter, which his friend is to deliver:

¹ Compare 1. 78 with 1. 33 *sqq.* The comet is that of A.D. 54.

² *Ecl.* 7 *passim*. They are those of Suet. *Ner.* 12: cp. Tac. *Ann.* 13. 31 (A.D. 57).

³ 4. 31 *sqq.*: see translation on p. 93.

Phyllis, to thee wan Lycidas this prayer
 Sends writ in verse, the which in dark despair
 He cons, as all the bitter night he lies,
 Searing with tears and wakefulness his eyes.
 The thrush, when stripped and bare the olive's seen,
 The hare, when now the last fall'n grape they glean—
 They waste not, as I, Lycidas, must pine
 Roaming alone, bereft of Phyllis mine.
 Ah me! From thee away, my lilies seem
 All blackened, no more fresh and clear the stream;
 Wine in the cup turns sour. But cam'st thou here,
 Lilies were white, the streamlet fresh and clear,
 Wine mellow in the cup. I am the same
 Whose singing thy delight thou didst proclaim,
 Whom thou wouldst fondly kiss, and bold invade
 The lips that o'er the Pan-pipe busy strayed.
 And canst thou now in Mopsus' husky voice
 And artless song and grating flute rejoice? ¹

Some touches remind us of Virgil's eighth eclogue, but the quarrel is of course from Theocritus. In the fourth and longest piece Corydon acquaints Meliboeus with his desire to sing the emperor's praises; his patron, who thinks him over-bold, learns with surprise that the shepherd's brother Amyntas cherishes the same hopes.

And can it be no check from you he finds
 Whene'er with fragrant wax the reeds he binds?
 Oft, when he tried his hemlock thin to sound,
 You cut him short and like a father frowned.
 Full often, Corydon, I've heard you say
 'Best break your pipes: the Muses do not pay,
 My son, so rather, courting them no more,
 Of cornels red and acorns make a store,
 Bring herds of kine to fill the foaming pail
 And cry the milk o'er all the town for sale.
 What help 'gainst hunger can your piping bring?
 My songs, at least, there's none I know will sing—
 Save windy echoes from the crags that ring.'

CORYDON. I said so, Meliboeus, once, I own;
 But times are changed, and Heaven's more
 gracious grown.

Hope smiles now on me, and I need not seek
 Hedge berries wild or with green mallows eke
 Mine hunger out. And this to thee I owe :
 Bread on my board I thro' thy bounty know.
 There's not a plaintive note can find a place
 In all my songs—thro' Meliboeus' grace ;
 Through thee it is that I so amply dine,
 And may thereafter at my ease recline
 In shady covert, and the groves am free
 To tread where Amaryllis loves to be.¹

Will his patron judge a sample of what he hopes to write? He will, and, Amyntas arriving at this opportune moment, the brothers sing, in alternate five-line stanzas, a panegyric with which Meliboeus declares himself much impressed. In the fifth eclogue old Micon, resigning his sheep and goats to young Canthus, gives him advice as to their care. Virgil's remarks on the subject are not forgotten, but the account of the shearing ² is not from the third Georgic, and is much fuller than anything that Varro and Columella say on the matter. In Eclogue Six stakes are laid and a judge chosen for a singing match, but the competitors begin to abuse each other with such vigour that the umpire begs to be excused. In the last poem a shepherd, fresh returned from Rome, describes the amphitheatre and the marvels that he has witnessed therein. The flattery of the emperor at the close ends so abruptly that it seems almost certain that some lines have been lost.

There seems to be a reminiscence of Eclogue One in the famous *Vigil of Venus* : it can hardly be by mere coincidence that in both poems the cattle 'extend their sides,' as Parnell translates in his version of the later poem, beneath the *genista* tree.³ Towards

¹ 4. 19-38.

² See ll. 66 sqq.

³ *Ecl.* 1. 5 *molle sub hirsuta latus explicuere genesta, Peruigil.* 81
ecce iam subter genestas explicant tauri latus.

the end of the third century Nemesianus of Carthage in his four eclogues borrows freely, sometimes whole lines, from Calpurnius: the inclusion of both poets in the same MS. led to the ascription of all eleven pieces to Calpurnius alone, and traces of this mistake have survived until very recent times. The Carolingian Modoin¹ uses Calpurnius in an eclogue of his own, Shakespeare's Mantuan and Sannazaro know him, and Montaigne makes good use of Eclogue Seven in his discursive chapter on coaches.

Calpurnius has been suggested as author for a panegyric of Piso in 261 hexameters first published in 1527 from a now lost MS., which ascribed it to Virgil.² One of the extant MSS., which contain only excerpts, assigns it to Lucan, and certainly the monotony of the verse and the resemblance between the personality of the hero and that of the conspirator Piso—both, for instance, are great draught players³—are in favour of the later period. A two-line passage that reads very like an echo of one in the fourth eclogue of Calpurnius⁴ is really the only connecting link between that poet and the panegyric, an industrious, uninspired piece of work whose only interest lies in its detailed allusion to the ancient game of *latrunculi*.

To Nero's time no doubt belong also two eclogues preserved in a tenth-century Einsiedeln MS. first published in 1869.⁵ Both praise the emperor's skill with the harp, and the first, which describes a singing

¹ Manilius, *Gesch. der lat. Lit. des Mittelalters*, p. 550.

² It is edited in Baehrens' *Poetae Latini Minores*, vol. 1, pp. 225 sqq.

³ Cp. *Pan.* 190 sqq. with the scholiast on Juv. 5. 109 *in latruncolorum lusu tam perfectus et callidus et ad eum ludentem concurreretur*.

⁴ Ll. 246, 247; *Calp.* 4. 152, 153.

⁵ They are edited in Baehrens l.c., vol. 3, pp. 63 sqq.

match (without however mention of the award), refers to a composition of his upon the fall of Troy. The second begins with lively dialogue—

CORYDON. Why, Mystes, dumb ?

MYSTES. My joy 's o'ercast with care
Feasts cannot banish ; nay, it waxes there,
Amidst the cups, loves there to lie reclined.

CORYDON. I take you not.

MYSTES. Nor speak I all my mind.

CORYDON. A wolf's waylaid your flock ?

MYSTES. I 've dogs that keep
Good watch, and fear no foe.

CORYDON. E'en such may sleep.

MYSTES. 'Tis deeper down : the mark you're all beside.

CORYDON. Yet without wind is seldom rough the tide.

MYSTES. You'd never guess it : plenty is my bane.

CORYDON. Ah, luxury and ease must still complain !

MYSTES. Well if you wish to hear by what I'm bored
Yon spreading boughs a palsied shade afford.

CORYDON. The elm ? And see, the grass invites repose
(*They seat themselves.*)

Come now, the cause for thy reserve disclose.

It turns out to be the return of the Golden Age that has obsessed the shepherd's mind ! The suggestion that the poems are respectively the *Panegyric of Nero* and the *Saturnalia*, which we know to have been composed by Lucan,¹ is ingenious and nothing more. Lucan's *Saturnalia* was almost certainly connected with the great December carnival, not a description of an age that was to resemble the golden one in which Saturn was king ; as for panegyrics of Nero, the beginning of his reign must have inspired scores of them.

§ 3. *Lyrical and Amatory Poetry*

Of lyric poets no longer alive, Quintilian holds

¹ See note on p. 19.

Caesius Bassus, the friend of Persius, the only one worth reading after Horace.¹ We have still, in mutilated condition, a treatise on metre which seems to have been his work, but neither his verses nor those of any other lyric poet belonging to our period have come down to us. Quintilian holds him inferior to some writers who were still alive: one rather doubts if he reckoned among these the Passennus Paullus whom the younger Pliny mentions as a writer of Horatian odes,² or Vestricius Spurinna, whose 'learned' odes the same Pliny praises so warmly³ that Caspar Barth was impelled to try and pass off as his work four pieces for which he was himself solely responsible. Passennus, according to Pliny,⁴ wrote also Propertian elegies which have vanished as completely as his odes, as completely as those of Pliny himself, who found reeling them off mere child's play, when one had nothing better to do,⁵ and Stella, the patron of Martial and Statius.⁶ From the pen of Sulpicia, whom Martial mentions as authoress of amatory poetry, in which she chose for theme the, for ancient amorists at any rate, very unorthodox one of conjugal felicity, the scholiast on Juvenal has preserved two iambics.⁷

¹ IO. I. 96. *si quem adicere (Horatio) uelis, is erit Caesius Bassus . . . sed eum longe praecedunt ingenia uiuentium.* Persius' sixth satire is addressed to him, and the scholiast there says that he perished in the eruption of Vesuvius.

² *Ep.* 9. 22. 2.

³ *Ep.* 3. 1. 7.

⁴ *Ep.* 6. 15. 1; 9. 22. 1, 2.

⁵ *Ep.* 7. 4. 2-7.

⁶ Mart. 4. 6. 4, 5; 7. 14. 5; Stat. *Silu.* 1. 2. 197, 252 *sqq.*

⁷ Mart. 10. 35 and 38, scholiast on Juv. 6. 537. The seventy hexameters discovered at Bobbio in 1493 and representing the lamentations of a Sulpicia (clearly intended for Martial's poetess) over the decay of culture under the reigning emperor are almost certainly a late concoction.

§ 4. *Translations*

Germanicus, the nephew of Tiberius, must originally have borne the Claudian name, and to him is generally ascribed a hexameter version of Aratus' astronomical poem, the *Phaenomena*, which bears the name of Claudius Caesar. The death of Augustus is implied in one passage;¹ the emperor invoked as *Father* will be Tiberius, whose adopted son Germanicus was. That he did translate the *Phaenomena* we learn from Lactantius:² Cicero had done the same in his youth. The later version is the more independent, and contains several passages, varying in length from fifteen to a hundred and sixty-three lines, for which the original contains no equivalent. The other part of the work is of interest mainly as a concrete example of the way the translation theories so carefully taught in the schools of rhetoric were put into actual practice. Priscian quotes 'Caesar in Aratus';³ the best MSS. date from the ninth and tenth centuries.

To our period also is generally ascribed the abridged *Iliad*, in 1070 hexameters, which the best MSS., naming no author, style *The Book of Homer*.⁴ The warmth of a reference to the Julian house⁵ suggests a date anterior to the death of Nero, and the Latinity is tolerable enough. The arrangement is very uneven, a quarter of the work being devoted to the summary

¹ Ll. 558 sqq.: *hic Auguste tuum genitali corpore numen | attonitas inter gentes patriamque pauentem | in caelum tulit et maternis astris*. The poem is printed in Baehrens, l.c., vol. 1, pp. 148 sqq.

² *Div. Inst.* 5. 5. 4.

³ *De Fig.* 32 (*Gramm. Lat.* 3, p. 417).

⁴ It is edited in Baehrens, l.c., vol. 3, pp. 7 sqq.

⁵ Ll. 899 sqq.: *quem (Aenean) nisi seruasset magnarum rector aquarum | ut profugus laetis Troiam repararet in aruis | augustumque genus claris submitteret astris | non carae gentis nobis mansisset origo*.

of the first two books, more than half of it to that of the first five. Sometimes entirely new matter is introduced, but the general effect is that of a summary by a third-rate author of his recollections of the *Iliad*. To the book's intrinsic dullness modern ingenuity has imparted a modicum of interest by the attempt to discover in the initial letters of certain lines an acrostic revealing, in accordance with a practice by no means rare in *later* verse, the name of the author. *If* only the seventh line began with U, not P, and *if* the last line but five began with R, not Q, then the initials of the first eight lines would make *Italicus*, and those of the last eight *scripsit*—‘Italicus wrote it!’ And in the last line but five it is possible, by a simple transposition which does no violence to the rules of Latin order or hexameter verse, to get the initial desired. Unfortunately—or fortunately—no plausible means for exorcizing *protulerant* from the beginning of the other line has been discovered. One Renaissance MS. actually ascribes the work to Bebius Italicus, but Renaissance scholars were quite as capable of noticing the traces of an acrostic as we moderns, and Bebius is probably only a corruption for Silius, itself a mere guess by some one whom the name Italicus reminded of the poet of the *Punica*—whose riper work is certainly not so brilliant that we need judge his greener years incapable of producing the abridgment.

In the Middle Ages the Latin *Iliad*, as it seems usually to have been called, had in the general ignorance of Greek to do much duty in place of the original. A tenth-century epic on the Emperor Berengar makes considerable use of it. How, from the twelfth century onwards, it came to bear the

name of *Pindar* or even *Theban Pindar*, it seems impossible to explain.

§ 5. *Vers de Société*

1. *The Epigram*

In various libraries, mainly in Paris and at Leyden, are preserved MSS. which contain miscellaneous collections of Latin verse, and in these, and in a printed book of 'Epigrams hitherto unpublished' brought out by the Frenchman Binet in 1579, we find a number of poems,¹ written for the most part in elegiac verse (though hendecasyllables occur), that are simply brief records of passing impressions or emotions and personal experiences, comparable on the one hand with the sonnets of modern times, on the other with the epigrams of the Greek Anthology. A few are ascribed by good MSS. to Seneca and Petronius, three to the former, four to the latter, and two of these last actually occur in our fragments of the *Satire*.² Two more contain passages which are quoted by Fulgentius in the sixth century as the work of Petronius. And Binet implies distinctly that the first ten of his pieces were ascribed to the same writer by the MS. from which he took them. That is unfortunately lost, but here again, a passage out of one of the ten pieces is cited as Petronian by Fulgentius. Two poems, Binet tells us, were labelled as the work of Germanicus Caesar, one as that of Caecilius Plinius Secundus.³ And there can be little doubt that very

¹ They are edited in Baehrens, l.c. vol. 4, and Riese, *Anthologia Latina*.

² §§ 14, 83.

³ The younger Pliny did compose poetry of this kind : see p. 246. His friends too dash off things that remind him of Calvus and Catullus : see *Ep.* i. 16. 5, 4. 27. 4 (where a pitiable specimen is preserved).

many of these poems, with their elegant Latin, polished verse, and, alas! trifling contents, belong to our period. Especially noticeable is a series commemorating the victories of Claudius in Britain.¹ Several contain references that make it practically certain that they are the work of Seneca.² Others are thoroughly Petronian in manner.

But, whoever they were, the writers of these pieces made little or no attempt to achieve a pointed ending, and herein present a marked contrast to the epigrammatist to whom most of this section must be devoted. Marcus Valerius Martialis was born at Bilbilis in Spain, somewhere about A.D. 40.³ Of his early days we know nothing, little of the first twenty years of life in Rome that began in 64.⁴ His countrymen the Senecas seem to have given him some assistance,⁵ but on their fall in 65 he must have had to turn elsewhere for patronage. Literature was not yet a profession, and the poor writer could exist at Rome only as a client. The clientship of the Empire, a very different thing from that of the best days of the Republic, stood rooted in two of the meanest of human weaknesses, the reluctance of men lacking a competence of their own to support themselves by taking up a trade or a profession, and the desire of the wealthy

¹ Baehrens, l.c. Nos. 29-36.

² Plin. *Ep.* 5. 3. 5 definitely states that Seneca did write such verse.

³ His birthplace is plainly stated in 1. 61. 11, 12 *te, Liciniane, gloriabitur nostra | nec me tacebit Bilbilis*. But although we know from 10. 24. 1 (*natales mihi Martiae Kalendae*) that his birthday was March 1st, the year has to be inferred from the fact that he is there fifty-seven years old, and there is ground for believing Book Ten to have been written A.D. 95-98.

⁴ Writing on the eve of his return he remarks that he has been away for thirty-four years: 10. 103. 7 *quattuor accessit tricesima messibus aetas | ut sine me Cereri rustica liba datis | moenia dum colimus dominae pulcherrima Romae*.

⁵ Cp. 4. 40. 2, 12. 36. 8.

to surround themselves with a numerous train of inexpensive dependants. The early appearance in the patron's reception-room, the attendance in the procession which escorted him to and from the Forum and other public resorts were burdens, but they were burdens that could occasionally be shirked, and about all the other duties involved there hung that atmosphere of vagueness and desultoriness in which alone the loafer of all ages finds himself able to breathe freely. Martial, who had more than most of these men to offer, was taken up by men of real distinction, such as the younger Pliny and his enemy Regulus, Silius Italicus and Arruntius Stella, imperial ministers like Sextus, keeper of the library, and the chamberlain Parthenius, ladies like Lucan's widow Polla.¹ Among his friends were Quintilian and Juvenal, another Martial, and the centurion Pudens, to whose marriage with the fair Briton Claudia Peregrina he devotes an epigram.² The first work of Martial's that has reached us is a volume of short poems on games with which Titus opened the Colosseum in A.D. 80;³ the second, a collection of some three hundred and fifty couplets such as might accompany the presents which were sent to friends or given to guests during the Saturn festival. The two classes, *Xenia* (gifts for friends) and *Apophoreta* (gifts to be taken away with you), had each a book to itself: ⁴ this production

¹ Sextus is addressed in 5. 5, whilst 5. 6 and 7. 21 are intended respectively for Parthenius and Polla. For references to the other four see pp. 95, 112, 24, 83.

² To Quintilian is addressed 2. 90, to Juvenal the epigrams mentioned in a note on p. 74. For *Julius* Martial see pp. 114, 116, for Pudens 4. 13.

³ The *liber spectaculorum* of the editions.

⁴ Books Thirteen and Fourteen in the editions. The victories over the Chatti, which brought Domitian the title *Germanicus* (about A.D. 84), seem still recent: cp. 14. 26, 170.

seems to have been published about 84. The first book of the epigrams proper seems to have appeared in 85/86, others following at intervals of about a year, until 96, when they numbered eleven.¹ From these we learn something of Martial's life and fortunes, that he has been a military tribune and so enjoys equestrian rank, lives at first at Rome in lodgings 'up three long flights of stairs,' removes for a space to Northern Italy, whence he returns to become presently the possessor of a country cottage, a town house, and a carriage.² No doubt he spent every penny he got; Pliny paid his passage money when in 98 he returned to Bilbilis.³ There for some time he was quite content to enjoy the leisure and ease for which he had so often sighed at Rome, but somewhere about 102 we find him producing a twelfth book of epigrams. He seems to have died about 104; at least that is the year to which a letter wherein Pliny mentions the news of his death as recent seems to be generally assigned.⁴

The book on the games reminds one of the ingenuity of modern advertisers. Each 'turn' is described as a masterpiece, and no opportunity missed for cheap sentiment or crude flattery. A tame tiger kills a lion: 'it never did such a thing in its native wilds: we men have taught it ferocity'; a lion is condemned to death for biting its trainer: 'our ruler expects even beasts to be humane.'⁵ The Saturnalia couplets have for us much of the interest that a sole surviving

¹ See Friedlaender, *Sittengesch. Roms*, E.T., vol. 4, pp. 298 sqq. Book Ten of our MSS. is however a second edition, published under Trajan: see 10. 7. and 34.

² 3. 95. 9, 10; 1. 117. 7; 3. 1. and 4; 9. 18. 2 and 97. 7, 8; 12. 24.

³ Plin. *Ep.* 3. 21. 2 *prosecutus eram uiaitico secedentem.*

⁴ 3. 21: see p. 28³.

⁵ 18. 5, 6; 10. 6.

copy of a Stores Price List of to-day might be expected to have for Macaulay's New Zealander. Objects so modern as sunbonnets, bells, clothes-brushes, and bird cages figure in them.¹ The *Apophoreta* are arranged in pairs in which an article that suits a heavy purse is followed by another that suits a light one.²

To the student of literature, however, Martial is represented by his epigrams. The pointed tendency which they exhibit is discernible, no doubt, in later Greek epigram: the author himself, however, names only Roman models—Catullus, Marsus, and Pedo.³ How much he owed to the two Augustans it is impossible to say, as we have none of their epigrams: the borrowings from the Greeks and Catullus are a mere drop in the ocean of his ingenuity. In many cases one feels that the nominal creditor is in equity the debtor, so much has his phrase or turn gained by its new surroundings. There are in all nearly 1200 epigrams, most of them quite short, couplets and quadruplets predominating, though some forty attain a length of twenty lines or more. The elegiac metre predominates, about 20 per cent. are in hendecasyllables, about 70 in the 'limping' iambic that ends with a spondee: one or two other metres are represented. Some of the poems conform to the original type of the *genus*, might serve, that is to say, as inscriptions for tombs, busts, or other works of art; a few are amphitheatrical, similar in scope to those

¹ 14. 29 (*causia*), 163 (*tintinnabulum*), 68 (*muscarium*), 77 (*cauea*).

² 14. 1. 5 *diuitis alternas et pauperis accipe sortes*.

³ See 1. praef.; 2. 71. 3, 77. 5; 5. 5. 6; 7. 99. 7; 8. 56. 24; 10. 78. 16. The reference in 1 praef. to Gaetulicus (presumably the consular who conspired unsuccessfully against Caligula in 39 B.C.) hardly proves that Martial regarded him as one of his models.

of the book on the games ; others are simply brief *contes*. But the majority fall under one of two other categories, according as they have for subject or *bona fide* addressee a friend or patron of the writer's or describe, more or less satirically, some character or incident or institution of the day. Not that satire is entirely absent in the first class, or that many pieces of the second do not contain the name of an *addressee*. But on the whole, the distinction just drawn will, I think, be found to hold good. In the second class, at any rate, of the exceptions at which I have hinted, the connexion of addressee and poem is often very loose, residing indeed in some cases simply in the suitableness of the name to the particular metre involved.

Martial's Muse, he tells us, prompted the composition of works 'seasoned with true Roman wit, in which Life should read and recognize the picture of its own manners and customs.'¹ 'Humanity,' he says somewhere else (Addison characteristically enough making the sentence serve as motto to a *Spectator*), 'Humanity is the predominant flavour of my books.'² Many a type, indeed, and many a trait that we might else have been tempted to think peculiarly modern have they handed down to us. The man who will beg or borrow, but never buy, an author's works, the impressive person who whispers everything—even so open a secret as Domitian's virtues,—the dilettante who does everything smartly but nothing well, the shopper who has the whole place turned upside down and then goes off with a couple of cheap tumblers, the old butler who wants to keep

¹ 8. 3. 19 *tu Romanos lepido sale tinguere libellos :|adgnoscat mores Vita legetaque suos.*

² 10. 4. 10 *hominem pagina nostra sapit.*

young master under his thumb long after he has reached man's estate, the barber under whose razor you bleed like a self-slashing priest of Cybele, the collector who makes good wines mouldy by talking shop over them, the man who, because he is in general demand, thinks people love him, when they only find him amusing¹—these are certainly with us still, even if we have lost the ladies who claim the right to call their wigs their own hair (have they not paid for it?), or, being seen only with women older or plainer than themselves, are suspected of selecting foils for their own charms, or vow that if they lost their pearls life would become unendurable.² Who cannot sympathize with the complaint that Novius, who lives so near, is the last person Martial ever sees, understand the allusion to twenty-year-old lawsuits and country houses where the rural produce comes from town, recognize the shops where the overflow of the stock on to the pavement drives pedestrians into the mire, the desirable residence which the agent sets off by filling it with choice furniture, *not* included in the terms of sale?³ Less obtrusively modern is the *captator*, courting childless millionaires whose heir he hopes to become—

You know he's a toady, you know he loves pelf,
 And you know what it is he would hail as good news,
 Yet, poor fool that you are, make him heir to yourself
 And would have him (what lunacy!) stand in your shoes.
 'But the presents he gave me?' 'Twas only his bait.
 Can the angler be dear to the fish he has caught?
 When you die, d'ye suppose he'll be moved at your fate?
 If you want him to mourn, you had best leave him nought;⁴

¹ 1. 117 (cp. 4. 72); 1. 89. 6; 2. 7. 7; 9. 59; 11. 39; 11. 84; 8. 6; 7. 76.

² 6. 12; 8. 79; 8. 81.

³ 1. 86; 7. 65. 1; 3. 47; 7. 61; 12. 66.

⁴ 6. 63.

the *laudicenus*, or 'smell-feast' as Davies calls him, who cadges for invitations by means of fulsome flattery, a melancholy object as evening shades come on and find him unattached—

See Selius there, a cloud upon his face.
The Arcade's deserted : still he haunts the place.
His listless look hints at distress profound,
His nose uncomely all but scrapes the ground. . . .
'Tis not that friend or brother's turned to dust.
Both sons are well, and long will be, I trust.
His wife's all right, safe too her dowry cash.
Tenants and managers—they've not gone smash.
His servants—none of them have run away.
What is it, then ? *He dines at home to-day* ;¹

the *recitator* who bores every one with the reading of his literary compositions, even abusing the position of host for this purpose, until his dinner-guests flee, as the sun of mythology fled before the scarcely more unnatural banquet of Thyestes.² It was not the only way hosts offended. There were men who had magnificent hothouses, but put you to sleep in draughty attics :

Lest your fruit trees in winter turn black
Or their delicate buds the wind bite,
The chill breezes with glass you drive back,
That admits all the sunshine and light.

In garret whose window won't close,
Where old Boreas himself couldn't rest,
You expect an old friend to repose.
To your trees would I sooner be guest.³

Other interesting figures are the thieving doctor, who,

detected, while he stole
A patient's favourite drinking bowl,
Had still his answer pat enough :
' You fool ! You shouldn't touch the stuff ;' ⁴

¹ 2. 11.

² 3. 45.

³ 8. 14.

⁴ 9. 96.

the brunette, who wished to be bleached fair :

In Tibur's sun, the nut-brown maid was told,
Ivory grows white though yellow turned and old.
Thither she hies her, but ere long comes back
(So strong the upland air) not blonde, but black ;¹

the auctioneer, who is a little too clever :

' Now don't suppose (says he) the vendor's pressed.
Why, he's got thousands out at interest.
What is it then ? Slaves, herds and harvest there
He lost, and for the place has ceased to care.'
Who 'd bid, that's not on going bankrupt set ?
That fatal farm—the vendor has it yet.²

Martial's humour, varied as it seems at first sight to be, falls really under a comparatively small number of heads, or *figures* as he himself would have phrased it. The commonest, I suppose, is *Paradox*. Calenus, who as a poor man had always been generous, inherits a fortune, and all his friends rejoice—

But as tho' not a penny you 'd had,
Nay, had lost an equivalent sum,
Of starvation you're making a fad,
And the meanest of men have become,
That no more than a few coppers spends
On choice banquets (but once a year due)
And for us your seven oldest of friends
Scarce will part with a counterfeit sou.
What, Calenus, to deeds of such merit
Can the proper thing be to reply ?
Oh, we hope ten times more you 'll inherit :
Then you're certain of hunger to die !³

Here is a reply to an invitation :

You ask me to dinner and say there will be
Three hundred at table, all strangers to me,
And because I refuse you're surprised and make moan.
Why, Fabullus, I don't relish dining alone.⁴

The whole point of the protest against Postumus'

¹ 7. 13.

² 1. 85. 3 *sqq.*

³ 1. 99. 8 *sqq.*

⁴ 11. 35.

supercilious politeness lies in the semblance of contradiction involved in the last sentence :

With only half a lip you kiss,
And half of that I ne'er should miss.
A greater boon, of worth untold,
Wilt grant me ? That whole half withhold.¹

Closely akin to this figure is the *Sudden Surprise* of—

I'm annoyed, my Luperus : for ages your friend
Uninvited to dinner you've kept.
I shall take my revenge. You may beg, coax, and send—
'Well ? And what will you do ?' Why, accept.²

or

It's made you a widower four times, so they say,
This bottle you want me to sample to-day.
Oh, I don't think it's likely, I'm sure it's a lie :
All the same at the moment I'm not feeling dry.³

Sometimes the abrupt turn is in the nature of an aside. 'My desire for wealth isn't based on the ignoble motives of the man in the street. I don't wish to buy estates, fine furniture, pampered slaves—

I swear that isn't what I'd do with it.
What then ? oh, give 't away—and build a bit !'⁴

the mania for putting up and enlarging luxurious country houses being so prevalent that Juvenal uses the word 'builder' as a term of reproach. *Definition* is another of Martial's weapons :

Cinna 'gainst me (so 'tis said)
Verses doth endite,
He whose lines are never read
Can't be held to write.

Tongilius in fever ? I know what he's at :
On the dainties his toadies will send he'd be fat. . . .
He must have a hot bath, every doctor's agreed.
Why, you idiots, it isn't a *fever* : it's *greed* !⁵

¹ 2. 10.

⁴ 9. 22. 15, 16.

² 6. 51.

⁵ 3. 9. and (with omissions) 2. 40.

³ 4. 69. 3, 4.

Exaggeration crops out everywhere, its form varying from that it takes in the simple account of the barber who shaves so meticulously that by the time he has finished a fresh growth has begun to appear,¹ to that of elaborate passages like the description of his country estate: 'my window garden at Rome is larger, a grasshopper's wing will cover it, an ant in a day eat up all its produce, a cucumber can't lie out straight on it, and a mouse can strip it as clear as the great boar did the fields of Calydon.'² Last may be mentioned a class for which I can think of no better label than the word whimsical:

When, Labienus, you I chanced to see
 Sitting alone, methought that I saw three:
 And what it was my senses thus misled
 Was—just the reckoning of your bald head.
 You've locks on this, and locks on th' other side
 Such as a pretty girl might own with pride,
 But in the centre you're completely bare:
 In all the expanse there isn't seen a hair.
 This in the theatre no small boon you found
 When Caesar sent free luncheon baskets round.
 Three of those same did you bring home as prize:
 What Geryon looked like, now I realize.³

Chloe much-loved seven husbands dead
 Unto one tomb consigned.

'Twas *Chloe's work* the inscription said:
 Where could you franker find? ⁴

Your face is black, your hair like flame,
 And one eye's damaged, one foot lame:
 If, still, you're quite a decent chap—
 Well, 'tis a feather in your cap.⁵

¹ 7. 83.

² II. 18.

³ 5. 49. Geryon was a mythical monster possessed of three human heads.

⁴ 9. 15. The inscription would run *fecit Chloe*, and these words, which in reality simply signified that Chloe was responsible for the building of the tomb, were susceptible of the interpretation 'she was responsible for their deaths.'

⁵ 12. 54.

With Falernian of age and of flavour
 Newest Vatican wherefore combine ?
 Has the filthy stuff done you a favour ?
 Have you ever been wronged by good wine ?
 No personal feeling I cherish :
 For the murdered Falernian I sigh.
 Though your guests may deservedly perish,
 It is not for such bottles to die.¹

You often ask what part I 'd play
 If wealth and influence came my way.
 D'ye think a man can thus infer
 His hypothetical character ?
 Then tell me, for example's sake,
 What sort of lion you would make ?²

Something like a seventh of the epigrams deal with objectionable themes, but the poet's defence, put forward in the first of the prose prefaces which precede certain books, to the effect that a certain amount of licentious language was expected of an epigrammatist, will not be ignored by any one who remembers how strong the influence of literary convention is upon Latin authors, how a serious person like the younger Pliny apologizes for composing what some thought 'rather wanton' verses with an appeal to the precedent set by—Cicero, Pollio, Brutus, Calvus, and many other men of unblemished reputation.³ The very line that is sometimes quoted to prove that Martial himself realized that he had gone far beyond conventional looseness—

My book's licentious, but my life is clean,
 is an echo of Catullus, to be explained as we have

¹ I. 18.

² 12. 92.

³ *Ep.* 4. 14. 4 *ex quibus (hendecasyllabis) si nonnulla tibi paullo petulantiora uidebuntur, erit eruditionis tuae cogitare summos illos et grauissimos uiros qui talia scripserunt non modo lasciui rerum sed ne uerbis quidem nudis abstinuisse* : cp. 5. 3. 5.

explained the Virgil imitation of the epics.¹ Martial was no Juvenal, and if he was to describe vice must do so in the language of raillery, not diatribe. With those who make much of the fact that he flattered Domitian, and charge him with having practised a shameless mendicancy, I have little patience. It is certainly a pity that he fawned before so vicious an emperor, but if he is to be blamed for not having swum against the flood, what are we to say of the Augustans who opened the gates for it at a time when the memory of the Republic was still green? The other charge is to my mind ridiculous. 'It never can have been *comme il faut* in any age or nation for a man of note . . . to be constantly asking for money, clothes, and dainties, and to pursue with volleys of abuse those who would give him nothing,' says Macaulay.² Yet who had a more intimate sense of the *comme il faut* of that very un-Victorian day than the Pliny who speaks of Martial as one from whom he has parted on most affectionate terms, whom he is now mourning as a prized friend, who has given him his best and would have given more if he could.³ The phrase 'volleys of abuse' finds its answer in Pliny's reference to the poet's freedom from bitterness.⁴ That he should be largely dependent on his patrons was inevitable for reasons already indicated—which

¹ Mart. i. 4. 8 *lasciua est nobis pagina, uita proba*; Catull. 16. 5 *nam castum esse decet pium poetam | ipsum, uersiculos nihil necesse est*, etc. (words actually cited by Pliny in the letter quoted just above.

² *Life and Letters*, chap. 14.

³ *Ep.* 3. 21. esp. § 6 *et tunc dimisi amicissime et nunc ut amicissimum defunctum esse doleo. dedit enim mihi quantum maximum potuit, daturus amplius si potuisset*. Pliny quotes in this letter some lines from an epigram (10. 19) in which Martial had paid him a compliment.

⁴ L.c. § 1 *qui plurimum in scribendo et salis haberet et fellis, nec candoris minus*.

Macaulay himself at the beginning of his essay on Montgomery's poems seems to recognize as adequate. It argues a certain lack of the sense of humour, at any rate a feeble conception of the difficulties that beset a man who has to turn out more or less regular instalments of occasional verse, when an epigram in which raptures over the receipt of a new suit are cut short by the reflexion 'but how shabby my old overcoat will look now' ¹ is construed as nothing else than a request for more clothes, or when mere impudence is read into such verses as :

Since in the house there's not a sou
There's but one thing to try,
I'll sell the gifts I've had of you,
Dear Regulus. Come, buy!

When the rain my thatched cottage but ill kept at bay,
And was like in the winter to swim right away,
There arrived from my friend a whole cartload of slates
That would carry off harmless the fiercest of spates.
Hark, my Stella! December blows boisterous and rude:
You've covered the cottage—the cotter left nude.²

Such documents cannot always be interpreted at sight. Long ago Lessing pointed out that in spite of lines addressed by Martial *To my wife* there was every reason to believe that he lived and died a bachelor. With the aid of a little common sense and openmindedness, however, much can be done with them, and some aspects in the character thus revealed are attractive. Our poet is by no means deaf to the appeal of the gentler emotions. Every one knows the pathetic turn he gives in little Erotion's epitaph to the conventional *Earth lie light* of the tombstones :

Rest lightly on her, earth, for she
Trode never heavily on thee.³

¹ 8. 28.

² 7. 16 and 36.

³ 5. 34. 9 *nec illi | terra grauis fueris : non fuit illa tibi.*

Less familiar is the poem in which a dove that has flown into Aratulla's bosom and resists dislodgment is prettily interpreted as harbinger of her exiled brother's imminent return.¹ There are two charming pieces on that butt of epigram and satire, the married state, one a little epithalamium concluding with the prayer

And when age comes may she no less adore,
He deem her wrinkled face young as of yore²—

the other celebrating the devotion of Nigrina, who brings her husband's ashes all the way from Asia Minor for burial and, in her reluctance to part with the precious burden, finds the long journey all too short.³ The frequent protests against ascription to his pen of spiteful, personal epigrams make one realize how he would have valued Pliny's testimony to his 'whiteness':⁴ when people ask him *Who is So-and-so of your verses?* he refuses to answer—or regrets that he has quite forgotten!⁵ Against the drudgery of his social duties he wages incessant war. He hates the early crowd and dirty streets, especially when a call finds the friend or patron not at home—

Two miles divide us, which, if I my door
Am once again to reach, amount to four. . . .
Two miles to see you, that I do not mind :
Four *not* to see you, all too much I find.⁶

City poets have a way of affecting a taste for the simple, open-air life of the country, but Martial's

¹ 8. 32.

² 4. 13. 9 *diligat illa senem quondam, sed et ipsa marito|tum quoque, cum fuerit, non uideatur anus*. The reference is to Pudens and Claudia of p. 101.

³ 9. 30.

⁴ See e.g. 7. 12. 3 *mea nec iuste quos odit pagina laesit | et mihi de nullo fama rubore placet*, 10. 3. 9 *procul a libellis nigra sit meis fama*.

⁵ 1. 96. 14 *quaeris quis hic sit? excidit mihi nomen*: cp. 2. 23.

⁶ 2. 5 (with omissions).

language on this topic rings true. A poem in which he discloses to a friend his longing for a little estate, where he can live without seeing callers, with the 'spoils of countryside and sea' at his command, ends convincingly :

'Gainst such a life let all that hate me rail
And live the round of fashion, fagged and pale.¹

The voice of envy is unmistakable in

Tho' each day you are gone will be dismal and sad,
Still, Domitius, I swear on my life, I am glad.
'Gainst the pain of my loss must be balanced my glee
From the city's tight collar to know your neck free.
So be off, and drink in every ray of the sun.
What a beau you will be when the holiday's done !
Why, your features returning your friend will scarce know,
And the wan crowds will envy your cheeks all aglow.
But alas ! Though you come back a nigger in face,
All the bronze of your travel Rome soon will erase ;²

as is that of the triumphant holiday-maker in

Oh, Faustinus, the things that you 've missed there in town,
The bright days and the loafing, without any gown,
Oh, the woods and the springs, and the sands firm and wet,
And bright Anxur itself, by the breakers all set,
And the bed whence through casements that ope on each side
One can see the boats moving on river or tide.³

It is unfortunately a fact that descriptions of scenery formed a regular item in the rhetoric courses, but the lines on a villa of the poet's friend Martial surely breathe nothing but that quiet yet intense satisfaction which the genuine lover of nature experiences in the contemplation of a panorama—

There stands a gently swelling hill
Whose crown an even terrace forms,
The which its own bright sunshine warms
When mists the winding valleys fill.

¹ I. 55. 13, 14.

² IO. 12. 3 *sqq.*

³ IO. 51. 5-10.

The dainty gables of thy home
 Spring lightly to the cloudless blue :
 This side, seven sovereign hills you view
 And at a glance appraise all Rome. . . .

But there, along the Northern way
 In silent car the traveller steals :
 No clatter from his whirling wheels
 The soft approach of sleep can stay.

No boatswain's call disturbs your dream,
 No shout of them that barges tow,
 Tho' close the Mulvian bridge below
 And boats that ride the sacred stream.¹

Those who seek further proof of the *bona fides* of such passages should turn to the twelfth book, and see Martial back in Spain, visiting spots whose dear, outlandish names he has twice ventured, regardless of all literary precedent and the susceptibilities of cultured ears, to catalogue in an epigram,² voicing his happiness in the poems which describe the estate bestowed on him by the lady bountiful Marcella,³ the delight of a birthday when one need not give a formal dinner party and worry as to whether the wine is carefully decanted and the idiosyncrasies of each guest properly accommodated.⁴

No sketch of Martial's personality can be adequate that does not do justice to the naïvety of his joy at finding himself famous, the bitterness with which he rails at the huge incomes made by jockeys, auctioneers, and architects, or the airs and graces of wealthy

¹ 4. 64. 5 sqq.

² 1. 49, 4. 55 : e.g. *tutelamque chorosque Rixamarum|et conuiuia festa Carduarum|et textis Peterin rosis rubentem|atque antiqua patrum theatra Rigas|et certos iaculo leui Silaos|Turgontique lacus Perusiaequē|et paruae uada pura Tuetonissae|et sanctum Buradonis ilicetum* (4 l.c. 16 sqq.)

³ 12. 31. In 12. 21 he tells this lady that her charm and culture make Bilbilis a Rome for him.

⁴ 12. 60.

parvenus, the persistence with which he preaches the text *Start life in lieu of mere existence, and not to-morrow, but to-day!* But Martial has already had his fair share in the pages of this book, and I must bid him farewell with a version of lines in which he himself, on the eve of his return to Spain, takes leave of the other Martial :

We have had together now
 Four and thirty years, I trow,
 Wherein mixed are grief and glee—
 But joys in the majority.
 If coloured stones the reckoning show,
 White for mirth and black for woe,
 White will be the longer row.
 Would you some vexation flee,
 Keep from bitter heart-pangs free?
 Tie with none too close maintain:
 You'll have less gladness—and less pain.¹

Martial's popularity came at once, never to depart. The grammarians note exceptional forms used by him, and he was held worthy of a critical edition in the brief Renaissance period that closes the fourth century.² Sidonius imitates him, and the epitaph of a Spanish bishop who died in A.D. 641 borrows one of his lines.³ How the surname *Coquus* (cook) attached itself to him in the Middle Ages—John of Salisbury for instance uses it—is a mystery as yet unsolved. It is curious to see how often he is quoted in such critical essays as Jonson's *Discoveries* and the preface to Webster's *White Devil*: Milton alleges his prose prefaces in defence of his own to *Samson*. But before these writers, Surrey has a version

¹ 12. 34.

² The record of this is preserved in the *scriptio* of one group of MSS.

³ For Sidonius cp. e.g. *Carm.* 23. 495 (=Mart. 2. 48. 8), for the bishop see Friedlaender's edition, p. 68¹.

in his *Songs and Sonnets*, and Elyot in the *Governour* admits that despite 'dissolute wrytynge' he has 'commendable sentences,' one of which he proceeds to murder by the clumsiest of translations.¹ Davies in his *Epigrams*, Herrick in *Hesperides*, betray a fair knowledge of our poet, and I fancy the microscopic details of *Oberon's Feast* are inspired by such passages as that quoted above from the description of a country estate. Cowley often quotes and translates in his *Essays*, Pope takes a line as motto for the *Rape of the Lock*. In France, Malherbe, Maynard, and Piron imitate or translate, and Voiture compares a translator of Curtius who is for ever retouching his work to the conscientious barber of p. 109. In Germany Lessing makes Martial the centre of his essay on the epigram and often imitates him in his own attempts at that kind of verse.

2. Statius' *Silvae*

The *Silvae* of Statius seem to have begun to appear almost immediately after the *Thebais*:² the thirty-two poems are arranged in five books, of which the first contains a reference to the death of Rutilius Gallus³ (about the end of A.D. 91), the third mentions the conclusion of the Sarmatian war⁴ (latter half of A.D. 92), the fourth appeared in A.D. 95,⁵ and the fifth, which alone has no prose preface, was probably posthumous. The *silva* on the death of the poet's

¹ *Governour* I. 13.

² For the life of Statius see p. 23.

³ *Silu.* I pr. *de quo* (sc. a poem dedicated to Rutilius) *nihil dico, ne uidear defuncti testis occasione mentiri.*

⁴ 3. 3. 170, 171.

⁵ The preface and the first *silva* do honour to Domitian's seventeenth consulship of that year.

father was originally composed three months after the event, the date of which is however uncertain (though certainly later than that of the eruption of Vesuvius in 79).¹ The other pieces contain nothing that justifies us in believing them to have been composed before 89.

The Greek word *ῥλη*, cognate and equivalent in general meaning of *silva* ('wood,' 'forest'), is often used in the sense 'raw material,' and this must have been the sense in which the Latin word was applied, as we know from Quintilian ² it was, by the rhetoricians to the first draught of a composition, fresh from its creator's pen, unpolished and unrevised. Of the nature of Lucan's *Silvae* we know nothing: those of Statius have one point in common with those of rhetoric. The prose prefaces which Martial prefixes to some books are the regular thing with Statius, and in those of the first three books he emphasizes the rapidity with which he has written the pieces—none, he says, of those in Book One have occupied him more than two days, and one was produced during a dinner. The implication is that they have not since been revised.

Save for four sets of hendecasyllables, one of Sapphics, and one of Alcaics,³ the *Silvae* are written in hexameters. Most of them are panegyrical and complimentary, addressed to the emperor or some influential person. The others are personal poems, some of them more or less autobiographical: an elegy

¹ See 5. 3 (esp. ll. 29 *sqq.*). The elder Statius had had in contemplation the composition of a poem on the eruption (l.c. 205 *sqq.*).

² Quint. 10. 3. 17 *primo decurrere per materiam stilo quam uelocissimo uolunt et sequentes calorem atque impetum ex tempore scribunt: hanc siluam uocant.*

³ Hendecasyllables; 1. 6, 2. 7, 4. 3. and 9; Sapphics; 4. 7; Alcaics; 4. 5.

on the poet's father, another on a favourite slave, an address to his wife, gently upbraiding her reluctance to exchange the capital for the provincial life of Naples, an invocation of sleep (inspired by an attack of insomnia), a letter to Quintilian's Vitorius Marcellus, and some Catullian verses in which he reproaches a friend who has sent him, as Saturnalia present, a musty copy of the speeches of Brutus.¹ As for the complimentary pieces, they either are written for particular occasions (Domitian's seventeenth consulship, Polla's celebration of Lucan's birthday, Stella's wedding, Rutilius' convalescence, Celer's voyage, the birth of a son to this or that person, the death of some one's father or wife or favourite slave),² or else describe some treasured possession or magnificent act of the great man's (a country house, or a temple in its grounds, a bath, a statuette, a freak tree, a dinner at court, Domitian's new road).³ Many of the addressees reckoned Martial among their clients, but Statius is on a better footing with them and never calls them *patroni*. It must be remembered that his pantomimé librettos were profitable. Martial had only one string to his bow.

There was nothing very new about the themes. The composition of speeches bearing upon a wedding, a birthday, a recovery from illness, a departure on a voyage, an act of generosity was practised in the rhetorical schools, and some of our pieces actually bear the technical names for such exercises—*epithalamium*, *genethliacon*, *soteria*, *propempticon*, *eucharisticon*. *Epicedion*, the name given to some of the

¹ The poems are (in the order of the text) 5. 3. and 5; 3. 5; 5. 4; 4. 4. and 9.

² So 4. 1; 2. 7; 1. 2; 1. 4; 3. 2; 4. 7. and 8; 3. 3; 5. 1; 2. 1. and 6.

³ So 1. 3. and 2. 2; 3. 1; 1. 5; 4. 6; 2. 3; 4. 2; 4. 3.

elegies, is probably a mere variant for that regularly borne by funeral orations, *epitaphion*. Two of them, however, bear the name *consolatio*, and this form of philosophic composition is really the model of all. The descriptions of scenery and works of art take us back again to the rhetorical sphere, where they were called *ecphrases*. Nor was even the treatment of such subjects in verse a novelty. The elegiac poets had long ago appropriated the arguments of the *consolationes*, Theocritus and Catullus composed *epithalamia*, Horace and other Augustans had wished comrade or mistress *bon voyage*, Propertius' description of Apollo's Palatine temple is an *ecphrasis*. Martial, indeed, in his epigrams had covered the whole field of the *Silvae*. The innovation on Statius' part lay in the all but exclusive use of the hexameter in place of elegiac and lyric measures, and in the length of the pieces, three-fifths of which run to over a hundred lines, and a sixth to over two hundred. In this second point, as well as in certain details of the composition, these poems remind one of the 'little epics' that have come down to us along with the idylls proper of Theocritus.

The hexameter of these poems is not that of the *Thebais*. It is the ideal vehicle for a composition that wishes to seem facile and rapid. Sometimes, as in the description of an episode which led to the improving of a temple of Hercules that stood in the grounds of Pollius' villa, a fairly unconstrained heroic verse seems to render it most justice :

Diana's ¹ day we spent upon the shore :
The house seemed cramped and smaller than of yore.

¹ Aug. 13th, the anniversary of the dedication of the temple of Diana on the Aventine.

There, 'neath a tree that spread with branches wide
 A leafy shelter, we the sun defied.
 Sudden the day's o'ercast, heaven disappears,
 And to the rainy south the Zephyr veers.
 E'en with such clouds did Juno Libya hide
 When to the Trojan Dido came as bride,
 And the nymphs' marriage-song filled all the countryside.
 Pell mell we make for shelter, and as swift
 Viands and brimming cups the servants shift;
 No lack of houses in the fields that lay
 Above; the hillside gleamed with arbours gay.
 But instant shelter's craved, and all believe
 The day will yet its promise fair retrieve.
 There stood, a temple styled, a simple shed
 Threatening with low-hung roof Alcides' head,
 That scarce to fishermen or shipwrecked crew
 Lodging could give: this is our *rendez-vous*.
 Here chairs and tables, crowds of serving men
 Are packed, and radiant Polla's comely train.
 The crush the temple's bankruptcy reveals.
 The god himself with smiles his shame conceals:
 To Pollius' cherished heart his way he wins
 And with embraces coaxing thus begins.¹

At other times it moves with a vigour and pace
 that call for the anapaest, as in the following passage
 from *Pollius' Villa at Surrentum*:

Of old masters and bronzes why read out the roll?
 You have all that Apelles' glad colours gave soul,
 All that Phidias did chisel, with workmanship rare,
 In the days when the temple at Pisa stood bare,
 What with life Polyclitus and Myron inspired,
 Bronze from Corinth's dead ashes, than gold more desired,
 Busts of captains and singers and sages of yore
 In whose footsteps you treading, soul steeped in their lore,
 Have all sorrow and passion now learned to allay,
 And in virtue found peace, your own master for aye.
 From turrets unnumbered comes view after view,
 Not one but 's delightful, not one but is new.
 Its own special sea-board each chamber can boast,
 Every window its strip of the opposite coast.

¹ 3. 1. 68-90.

'Tis Inarime here, but there Prochyta stern,
 Whilst next door mighty Hector's esquire ¹ you discern. . . .

Next in order comes Limon that wistfully eyes
 The fine house 'cross the bay where his dear master lies.
 But dearest the chamber that flings in thy face
 Straight across the wide waters thine own native place. . . .

On the billow's domain your rich cornfields intrude,
 With the nectar of Bacchus the cliffs are bedewed,
 And, when berries are mellow in autumn, full oft
 Under veil of the night climbs a sea-nymph aloft,
 With a spray ripe and lush clears her eyes of the brine,
 And plucks from the slopes the sweet fruit of the vine.
 Oft the spume of the billows the vintage will lave,
 And the satyrs go tumbling about in the wave,
 And Doris the mountain-Pans seek to surprise
 Here and there thro' the breakers as naked she flies.²

The language too is distinctly simpler than that of the epics. Unfortunately our MSS. (except for one particular poem) all descend from one that is now generally allowed to be the copy made for Poggio, by a scribe on whose ignorance he lays stress, of that which he himself discovered at the time of the Council of Constance. Anyhow, the text is full of corruptions, and the rashness of one editor who practically rewrote it has produced a reaction that finds nothing too forced and clumsy for acceptance as the work of Statius. A careful study of the less corrupt passages has convinced me of the justice of the statement which stands at the beginning of this paragraph. It must be remembered that although the poet's boasts as to the rapidity with which he works need not be taken too seriously, he certainly has been careful to give these pieces some of the characteristics of the

¹ Misenus, buried on the northern headland of the Bay of Naples, which regularly bore his name.

² 2. 2. 63-106 (with omissions).

impromptu: the similes, for instance, are much less elaborate than those of the epics, and the frequency with which words are repeated, or echoed in a derivative form, within the space of a few lines,¹ is too marked to be accidental. Such devices would surely have been absolutely nullified by the use of a precious vocabulary and the introduction of subtle conceits.

The modern tendency is to prefer the *Silvae* to the *Thebais*, a fact which makes it necessary to dwell upon the serious faults they exhibit. Callimachus, voting a great book a great evil, no doubt regarded the idyll epics with which I have compared Statius' pieces as vastly superior to the six thousand lines of Apollonius' *Argonautica*. But the length of even a short epic is too much for an occasional poem, and when Martial deals in an epigram with a theme to which Statius has devoted a *silva*² we realize the fact. The devices by which expansion is secured are not very varied, and generally suggest the rhetorical school. A favourite one is the introduction of divine machinery. This is not by any means inadmissible in poetry of this kind. On the contrary, the conception of Hercules, clearing away the soil by night so that the men who are building his temple are surprised next morning to find the ground so level,³ is surely quite happy. Much depends on the restraint with which the ornament is used, and unfortunately Statius rides it to death: nearly a third of the poems exhibit it in some form or other. About half the epithalamium

¹ See Vollmer's ed., *Einleitung*, pp. 28 sqq.

² Mart. 6. 42 describes the bath of *silu*. 1. 5, Mart. 7. 21, 22, and 23 are concerned with the birthday of Lucan, to which *silu*. 2. 7 is devoted.

³ 3. 1. 134 *decrescunt scopuli et rosea sub luce reversi | artifices mirantur opus*.

is concerned with the efforts of Venus to win the bride's love for the bridegroom, about half the *soteria* with the services of Apollo and Aesculapius, whilst Domitian's road evokes the apparitions of the river-god Voltumnus and the sibyl of Cumae.¹ Another wearisome feature is the mythological illustration or allusion. Here, again, the poet has some happy inspirations, but they are rare, the frigidities incessant. The theme of youthful charm and beauty is one we have seen our poet handle with success in the *Thebais*: in the *Silvae* he relies almost entirely on mythological figures. The Fates have done Glaucia to death. Why, those notorious child-slayers, Procne, Medea Athamas, yea, even Ulysses, who flung Astyanax down, would have spared one so gracious.² Here is a slave boy with whom Theseus, Paris, Achilles, Troilus, Parthenopaeus were not comparable.³ Earinus is an Endymion, an Atys, a Narcissus, a Hylas; Crispinus a horse is Ascanius, or, again, Troilus and Parthenopaeus.⁴ Once, indeed, it looks almost as if Statius had anticipated the principles of Euphuism and actually invented his examples. *An adopted son may be dearer than the child of one's own loins* is the point: that is why, he adds, Achilles had more kindness of his tutor Chiron than his father Peleus, and was accompanied to Troy not by the latter but by Phoenix, even as it was Acoetes, not Evander, came with Pallas to help Aeneas, and (choicest tit-bit of all!) Jove left Perseus to be reared by the fisherman Dictys.⁵ The reader of Statius never knows when he is not going to be shocked by some extraordinary instance of bad taste,

¹ 1. 2. 51-200, 4. 58-110; 4. 3. 69 sqq., 114 sqq.

² 2. 1. 140 sqq.

³ 2. 6. 25 sqq., 42 sqq.

⁴ 3. 4. 40 sqq., 5. 2. 118 sqq.

⁵ 2. 1. 84 sqq.

but the *Silvae* surely contain the poet's worst lapses in this direction. He is convinced that his wife would give her life for him, because she cherishes so faithfully the memory of his predecessor.¹ The attempt to clothe such an argument in words that will not jar would tax the powers of even a great writer, but Statius rushes fearlessly in and caps a vivid description of the way in which the widow 'yearns for the departed and clings to the memory of his obsequies' with a fatal *iam mea* 'though she is now mine.' How generous to little Glaucia Melior was may be gathered from the fact that he never let himself be tempted to buy his clothes *a size larger* (to allow for the boy's growth).² A wife on her death-bed ends her last address to her husband with a request that he will set up in her memory on the Capitol a golden image—of Domitian.³

Not, of course, that Statius' tenderness and power to express a beautiful thought entirely desert him in this new field. Some of the lines already quoted from the *Villa of Pollius* are most happy, and one feels the pathos of the passage⁴ where Glaucia, meeting in the shades the noble Blaesus, whom he recognizes as the original of a bust over which he has often seen his master bending, silently approaches and walks timidly along with him, plucking at the hem of his gown, until the stranger asks who he is, and on being informed lifts him to his shoulders, offering him 'such gifts as kindly Elysium vouchsafes, boughs that bear no fruit, birds that have no song, flowers whose buds are nipped and wan.'⁵ An attractive

¹ 3. 5. 50 sqq.

³ 5. 1. 189 sqq.

⁵ L.c. 203 *quæ munera mollis | Elysii, steriles ramos mutasque uolucres | porgit et obtuso pallentes germine flores.*

² 2. 1. 129 sqq.

⁴ 2. 1. 191 sqq.

poem that very soon caught the attention of modern critics is the invocation of sleep :

Kindest of gods, what sin or error's mine
That I alone must now thy gifts resign ?
Cattle and birds and beasts all silence keep
And trees low-bending mimic weary sleep.
Hushed the wild torrent's din ; ruffled no more
The deep ; its waves lie pillowed on the shore.
The seventh returning moon my fevered eyes
Finds still on guard ; seven times I've watched arise
Morning and even star ; the dawn as oft
Hath o'er my lamentations passed aloft
And flung in deep compassion of mine ills
O'er me the cooling dew her whip distils.
How can I suffer so, and live ? Not mine,
The thousand eyes of Argus, guard divine,
The which on duty he alternate left,
Never through all his frame of sleep bereft.
Yet one there well may be this livelong night,
Clasping his mistress, spurneth thee outright.
Oh, come from him. I ask not thou shouldst pour
The full strength of thy sleepy pinions' store :
Let happier men that ampler boon implore.
Enough, with tip of wand thou touch my head
Or pass with step light-hovering o'er my bed.¹

What Statius' own age thought of these poems we do not know. Quintilian's attack on the *silva* as a rhetorical exercise² was certainly not aimed at them. Claudian, Ausonius (especially in *Mosella*, where he easily surpasses our poet as a painter of nature), and Sidonius imitate them, the grammarian Priscian quotes a metrical peculiarity from them, and then they disappear, save for a few traces found in the time of Charlemagne (who himself imitates the epistolary *silva* to Vitorius), until the rediscovery by Poggio. J. G. de Balzac³ and Dryden show some

¹ 5. 4.

² See e.g. *Entretiens* vi.

³ 10. 3. 17.

familiarity with them, the latter borrowing more than once from the sleep-poem, as for instance in

Dogs cease to bark, the waves more faintly roar
*And roll themselves to sleep upon the shore.*¹

Horace Walpole sends West a few lines 'observed in Statius by Gray' which come from the Vitorius letter, dated, like Walpole's, from Naples. Goethe's appreciation of the *Silvae* is evidently due to the antiquarian interest attaching to several of them—and this, I fancy, is at the bottom of the modern tendency to prefer them to the epics. It is certainly difficult to think of any Latin poetry that provides more complete a collection of the faults with which the Romanticists reproach classicism.

¹ *Rival Ladies* 1. 3: cp. *Conquest of Mexico* 3. 2, *Annus Mirabilis* 98.

CHAPTER VI

ORATORY

THE field of eloquence was divided by the ancients into the three provinces, political, forensic, and epideictic. In the first of these, during our period, no subject, with perhaps the solitary exception of Seneca, had any opportunity to achieve a reputation. Of the emperors there seem to have been few that had not their share of the Roman gift for public speaking.¹ None, however, had the ease and grace of Augustus, and only a Velleius or a Martial could regard any of them as orators. In forensic eloquence, the rapid growth of a class of pleader that was actuated only by the consideration of the pecuniary reward which attended a successful prosecution or the favour with which the emperor was likely to bestow upon any one who had rid him of an enemy—*delatores* ('informers') as they were called, rather than *oratores*—did not prevent commoners of education and ability from seeking to win a great and honourable name. Nevertheless, no pleadings have reached us, and we have to rest content with what can be learned of the personalities of some eminent counsel and a few fragments that reveal little beyond the certainly surprising fact that

¹ Tacitus notes (*Ann.* 13. 3) that Nero was the first emperor who had to use speeches prepared by others. His account in *Hist.* 1. 90 (see p. 111¹⁰) and that of Suetonius' *Dom.* 20 imply that Otho and Domitian felt the same necessity.

even in compositions intended for ears so philistine as those of the average Roman jury the pointed style was *de rigueur*. In the case of some of these barristers we are not certain whether or no they published their speeches and so are strictly entitled to a place in this chapter of a literary history : of these I shall mention only such as are either named with some frequency or emphasis in literature of our period, or themselves, certainly, the authors of some literary work.

Mamercus Aemilius Scaurus, great-grandson of the notorious Scaurus of the Jugurthan war, is often mentioned by Tacitus,¹ and his eloquence, as he took part in the declamations, is described in some detail by the elder Seneca.² It was the dignified eloquence of the Republic, but the man himself was immoral and indolent, often postponing the study of his brief to the moment of coming into court or even robing. He offended Tiberius at the famous senate meeting in which the latter posed as unwilling to accept the call to empire : some twenty years later he was accused of various crimes against the emperor's life and honour (some ' treasonable lines ' in his play of *Atreus* being raked up at the same time against him), and anticipated conviction by suicide.³ Seven published speeches of his were burned by order of the senate.⁴

Cneius Domitius Afer, born at Nismes,⁵ was consul in A.D. 39, and died in A.D. 59,⁶ long after the eloquence which had made Tiberius style him ' an orator in his own right,'⁷ and had not always, if we believe Tacitus,

¹ See especially *Ann.* i. 13, 3. 66, 6. 9 and 29.

² *Contr.* 10 pr. 2, 3.

³ *Tac. Ann.* 6. 29, *Dio* 58. 24. See p. 56.

⁴ *Sen. l.c.*

⁵ Jerome, *Ad ann. Abr.* 2062.

⁶ *Tac. Ann.* 14. 19. For his career see *Prosop. Imp. Rom.* 2. p. 16.

⁷ *Tac. Ann.* 4. 52 *suo iure disertum*.

been honourably employed,¹ had become but a wreck.² Quintilian, who as a youth trained himself by observing his conduct of cases for which he was briefed, calls him far the best orator he has actually known.³ An opponent of the modern style, he would go out of his way to avoid the natural order of words if this would produce one of the rhythmical cadences affected by the fashion of the day.⁴ He published at least one speech, a treatise on witnesses, and a collection of *facetiae*.⁵

The philosopher Seneca, whose success at the bar was sufficient to provoke the jealousy of Caligula, published speeches—whether forensic or not there is nothing to show.⁶

Quintus Vibius Crispus of Vercelli⁷ is mentioned in the *Dialogus* as one who has for long enjoyed much influence from his skill as a pleader and is at the moment in high favour with Vespasian, in the *Histories* of Tacitus⁸ as one who had played the part of a *delator*. Quintilian finds in his style the grace and charm which Juvenal ascribes to his personal

¹ Tac. l.c. : cp. 66.

² Quint. 12. 11. 3 : cp. Tac. l.c.

³ For Quintilian's relation with him see *Inst. Or.* 5. 7. 7, Plin. *Ep.* 2. 14. 10 ; for his estimate, *Inst. Or.* 12. 11. 3 (cp. 10. 1. 118).

⁴ Quint. 9. 4. 31 *solebat . . . traicere in clausulis uerba, tantum asperandae compositionis gratia . . . ut pro Domitilla 'gratias agam continuo' et pro Laelia 'eis utrisque apud te iudicem periclitatur Laelia.'* Interrupted frequently by the applause vouchsafed to a counsel who was pleading in a neighbouring court, *intermissa causa, 'centumviri !' inquit 'hoc artificium perit'* (Plin. *Ep.* 2. 14. 11).

⁵ Quint. 10. 1. 24 (*pro Voluseno*), 5. 7. 7 (*libri duo in hanc rem [testes] compositi*), 6. 3. 42 (*dictorum urbane . . . editi libri*).

⁶ Dio 59. 19. 7, Quint. 10. 1. 129.

⁷ *Dial.* 7 *ausim contendere Marcellum Eprium . . . et Crispum Vibium non minus <illustres> esse in extremis partibus terrarum quam Capuae aut Vercellis, ubi nati dicuntur.* That Marcellus came from Capua we know (*Prosop. Imp. Rom.* 1 p. 415).

⁸ 2. 10.

character.¹ He seems to have been consul thrice and lived to at least eighty.² Quintilian quotes from a speech of his on behalf of a woman named Spatale, and from one delivered on the other side by Publius Galerius Trachalus,³ whom he regards as exceptionally well equipped in such externals as presence and voice.⁴ This man was consul with Silius in A.D. 68, and on friendly terms with Otho, whose imperial speeches he was believed to inspire.⁵

Three *personae dramatis* of the *Dialogus* next claim consideration. Marcus Aper and Julius Secundus were of Gallic origin,⁶ and the author represents them as the leading counsel of the early part of Vespasian's reign⁷ and warm supporters of the modern style. Julius was a friend of Quintilian, who thinks that only an untimely death prevented his becoming a really great orator : as it was, he lacked fire and in his anxiety to be eloquent was apt to forget the needs of his client.⁸ A third barrister, Vipstanus Messalla, was descended from the famous friend of Augustus. Tacitus has described with

¹ Quint. 5. 13. 48 *uir ingenii iucundi et elegantis*, Juv. 4. 81 *Crispi iucunda senectus*.

² For his career see *Prosop. Imp. Rom.* 3. p. 420, for his age Juv. l.c.

³ 8. 5. 17 and 19.

⁴ 10. 1. 119 *uocis quantum in nullo cognoui felicitas et pronuntiatio vel scenis suffectura et decor—omnia denique ei quae sunt extra superfuerunt* : cp. 12. 5. 5 sqq. and Tacitus l.c. in next note.

⁵ Tac. *Hist.* 1. 90 *in rebus urbanis Galerii Trachali ingenio Othonem uti credebatur, et erant qui genus ipsum orandi noscerent . . . ad implendas populi aures latum et sonans*.

⁶ *Dial.* 10 ; de Gallis nostris says Aper, speaking for both.

⁷ *Dial.* 2 *celeberrima tum ingenia fori nostri*.

⁸ *Inst. Or.* 10. 1. 120 *Iulio Secundo si longior contigisset aetas, clarissimum profecto nomen oratoris apud posteros foret. adiecisset enim . . . uirtutibus suis quod desiderari potest, id est autem, ut esset multo magis pugnans et saepius ad curam rerum ab elocutione respiceret* : cp. 3. 12.

appreciation the appeal which he made in the senate, when his brother Regulus was attacked there for having played the part of a *delator* under Nero.¹ Marcus Aquilius Regulus himself is painted by his enemy the younger Pliny as a blackguard who was not even a good speaker, by his client Martial as a man of eloquence and high character.² There is reason to believe that only the first half of each of these accounts is reliable.³ He seems to have died about A.D. 107.⁴ Contemporary with these men was Quintilian himself, who often refers to his work at the bar, though he published only one speech, and apologizes even for this one concession to 'a young man's craving for renown.'⁵

The fame which the younger Pliny describes Tacitus as already enjoying when he himself was still a youth⁶—somewhere about A.D. 80—he had presumably won in the courts. He had, if we may identify him with the author of the *Dialogus*, in his youth studied Aper and Secundus very much as we have seen Quintilian studying Afer;⁷ and we find him in one

¹ Hist. 4. 42 : cp. 3. 9 *egregius et qui solus ad id bellum artes bonas attulisset*.

² See especially Plin. Ep. 1. 5. 1. *sub quo (Domitiano) non minora flagitia commiserat quam sub Nerone, sed tectiora*, 14 *Regulus omnium bipedum nequissimus* (as some one called him in a letter), 4. 7. 5 (some said that Cato's definition of an orator, *uir bonus dicendi peritus*, must be changed in order to fit him into *uir malus, dicendi imperitus*) ; Mart. 1. 111. 1, 2 ; 4. 16. 6, 7.

³ In *Dial.* 15 Aper speaks of the eloquence of him and his brother as notorious, and Tac. Hist. 4. 42 shows that he lay under the suspicion of having been a *delator*.

⁴ The seventh book of Pliny's correspondence, the second letter of which refers to his death, is generally assigned to this year.

⁵ Quint. 7. 2. 24.

⁶ Ep. 7. 20. 4 *equidem adolescentulus cum iam tu fama gloriaque floeres*.

⁷ *Dial.* 2 *quos non ego in iudiciis modo utrosque studiose audiebam, sed domi quoque et in publico adsectabar*, etc.

of Pliny's letters himself the centre of an appreciative student circle.¹ The only case of his about which we hear belongs to A.D. 100, when he joined Pliny in the prosecution of Marius Priscus for oppressive conduct as governor of Africa, delivering a speech which his friend praises as 'full of eloquence and the stately dignity which is the peculiar virtue of his oratorical style.'² Pliny himself, coming to the bar at the age of nineteen,³ soon gathered about him a practice to the magnitude of which his letters bear abundant testimony. The centumviral court, which dealt mainly with questions of inheritance, was, he says, his special 'arena,'⁴ but he took part also in criminal trials, several of which were of the same type as that of Marius mentioned above.⁵ The loss of all his pleadings is not, it need hardly be remarked, the result of remissness on the part of Pliny, who not only edited them but made the bold innovation of sandwiching a *recitatio* stage betwixt delivery and publication.⁶

It is indeed to Pliny that we owe the only speech that has come down to us from this period, a specimen of epideictic, that branch of oratory which appeals almost as much to the reading public as to the audience before whom it is actually delivered. The commonest form it took at Rome, in Republican times at least, must have been the funeral panegyric of the deceased, of which we have instances in Antony's famous speech over Caesar's body and the eulogy pronounced by Tacitus as consul in A.D. 97 at the obsequies of Verginius

¹ Ep. 4. 13. 10 *copia studiosorum quae ad te ex admiratione ingenii tui conuenit.*

² Ep. 2. 11. 17 *respondit . . . eloquentissime et, quod eximium orationi eius inest, σεμνῶς.*

³ Ep. 5. 8. 8.

⁵ See Ep. 3. 4 and 9, 4. 9, 5. 20, 7. 6.

⁴ Ep. 6. 12. 2.

⁶ Ep. 7. 17. 2.

Rufus.¹ Pliny's *Panegyric* (so entitled by the very late MSS. in which it is preserved) is simply a revised version of the speech in which, on the occasion of his entering upon the consulship for a portion of the year A.D. 100, he expressed to the senate the gratitude with which the emperor's condescension had inspired himself and his colleague. Our text runs to ninety-five chapters, and the friends to whom Pliny gave a preliminary reading had to give him three sittings.² Three chapters may be classed as introductory, two form the peroration, four convey the actual thanksgiving: the rest are wholly panegyric. Pliny himself expresses the desire that his performance shall be judged by its arrangement, the transitions (from topic to topic), and the figures of speech.³ These latter strike us as overdone, but epideictic compositions were expected to luxuriate in this direction. The transitions are often ingenious and neat. As for the arrangement, it does not particularly impress one. First we get, in twenty chapters, a summary of the events of Trajan's life, much stress being laid on the good impression made by his demeanour during the entry into the city. The cue, 'subsequent events confirmed, nay, bettered our hopes,'⁴ then introduces a catalogue of virtues. Generosity, regard for the corn supply, justice and literature, affability, moderation in the assumption of titles and offices follow in succession, occupying some twenty-five chapters. Mention under the last head of Trajan's unwillingness to hold a third consulship⁵ leads to a digression of

¹ *Ep.* 2. 1. 6.

² *Ep.* 3. 18. 4.

³ *Ep.* 3. 13. 3 *atque utinam ordo saltem et transitus et figurae simul spectarentur.*

⁴ 24. 1 *onerasset alium eiusmodi introitus: tu cotidie admirabilior et melior.*

⁵ 56. 3.

about twenty chapters describing his successful administration of the office. After this¹ the catalogue starts afresh, and ten more chapters describe the ruler's clemency, his amusements, and his management of his household. Then come the actual thanksgiving and peroration, in six chapters as mentioned above.

As a source for the early history of Trajan—tainted, of course, by the very principles upon which it had to be composed—the speech is of some importance. To the student of Latin literature the unusual combination of Ciceronian period with Silver point is highly interesting. The following is a fairly representative 'purple patch':

It was always Egypt's boast that she could give nurture and increase to the corn seed without owing anything to the rains of heaven. Regularly flooded by her own river, fertilized by no water other than that which she herself has carried, she would array herself in harvests so ample that she could challenge the most fertile lands without fear of ever suffering defeat. And this country an unexpected drought had parched even unto the reproach of barrenness. Sluggard Nile had left his bed late and listless, comparable even now with great rivers, but with rivers only. A great expanse of ground that had been wont to be covered and refreshed by its stream was thus left white and deep in dust. Vainly then did Egypt long for rain-clouds and bethink her of the heavens, now that the author of her richness, straitened and diminished, had, with the narrow bounds that he had set to his own increase, checked her fertility. For it was not merely that a river which when it swells roams far afield had halted stockstill whilst yet short of the higher ground it had always reached before: even from the gentle slopes that should hold it awhile had it retired, and this not with the quiet, gradual ebb (of former years), leaving what was not yet sufficiently watered

¹ At 79. 5 where the editors should have begun a new paragraph.

to share the fate of what had remained dry. And so this country, baulked of the inundation that was fertility, as she had been wont to appeal to her river for aid appealed now to Caesar, and her troubles lasted but so long as it took to send the tidings. So swift, Sire, your power, so evenly alert in all directions and prompt your benevolence, that they who in your time meet with misfortune find that it needs but your knowledge thereof for them to receive redress and salvation.¹

Pliny's speech became a model for similar addresses to the throne, and is in fact (if we leave out of account some palimpsest fragments of the seventh century) preserved only as the first of a collection of such things, the rest of which belong to the years 289-389, and sometimes borrow from Pliny. Macrobius' reference to Pliny's style as rich and ornate² must be based upon his reading of the *Panegyric*, which, after being mentioned or quoted by Salvianus and Sidonius,³ disappears from our ken until the discovery by Aurispa in 1433 of a MS. of the collection. Since then it must have inspired a good many kindred efforts, particularly in France, where it was certainly well known.

¹ *Pan.* 30.

² *Saturnal.* 5. 1. 7 *pingue et floridum.*

³ *Saluian. Gub. Dei* 5. 11. 60, *Sidon. Ep.* 8. 10. 3.

CHAPTER VII

HISTORY, BIOGRAPHY, AND MEMOIRS

THE historians of our period are curiously loth to deal with any events that fall outside the comparatively short period which separates them from, say, 60 B.C., the year that saw the coalition of Caesar, Pompey, and Crassus. No one, for instance, took some special portion of republican history, such as the conflict between the orders or one of the Punic wars, and gave a piquant, semi-philosophical 'modern' version of it. Perhaps it was felt that Livy had so marvellously blended the colours of Gold and Silver prose that any one who attempted to give a new rendering of his subjects with the somewhat limited palette of this later age must inevitably appear at a disadvantage.

(a) WRITERS BEFORE TACITUS

Yet the narrow field these men chose was even in the time of Horace by no means free from danger.¹ If Augustus tolerated Livy's partiality for Pompey and respect for Brutus and Cassius,² it was in his reign that the books of the Pompeian Labienus, almost certainly of a historical character, were burned by order of the senate³—the first instance of this curious

¹ Hor. *Od.* 2. 1. 6 *periculosae plenum opus aleae*.

² Tac. *Ann.* 4. 34.

³ Sen. *Contr.* 10 pr. 5 *sqq.* Montaigne's remarks occur in the eighth chapter of the second book of the *Essais*. The works of Cassius Severus, which afterwards met the same fate (Suet. *Cal.* 16),

mode of punishment, against which the elder Seneca and Montaigne in his wake have protested so warmly. Things were likely to be worse under Tiberius, and in the eleventh year of his reign Cremutius Cordus, author of a history of the civil wars that probably started with the death of Caesar, was accused of having eulogized Brutus and styled Cassius 'the last of the Romans.'¹ The passages seem to have been 'read' in the presence of Augustus without apparently offending his susceptibilities:² probably the published work contained other passages not then read and much more offensive. Suetonius, describing how on one occasion members of the senate were not admitted into the presence of Augustus until they had been searched, cites Cremutius as his authority.³ The accused anticipated certain conviction by starving himself to death. Some copies of his works, which were ordered to be burned, were preserved mainly by the devotion of his daughter Marcia,⁴ to be restored to circulation, along with those of Cassius and Labienus, by Caligula.⁵ Some extracts which the elder Seneca gives from his account of Cicero's end and estimate of his character (a man, he said, remarkable at once for the *magnitude* and the *multitude* of his merits)⁶

belonged, I think, rather to *chronique scandaleuse* than legitimate history.

¹ Tac. *Ann.* 4. 34. The subject is inferred from Sen. *Consol. ad Marciam* 26. 5, Dio 57. 24.

² Suet. *Tib.* 61 *scripta abolita, quamvis probarentur ante aliquot annos etiam Augusto audiente recitata.*

³ *Aug.* 35.

⁴ Dio 57. 24: cp. Tac. *Ann.* 4. 35.

⁵ Suet. *Cal.* 16. Even then they must have been censored, if, that is, the historian of whom Quintilian speaks (10. 1. 104) as one whose outspokenness was visible 'even though many of the utterances that cost him dear have been excised' was really Cremutius. The name, however, stands in the text only by virtue of a (highly probable) conjecture.

⁶ *Suas.* 6. 23.

make one wonder whether we should have gained much had the work of this staunch republican been preserved to us instead of that of the two obsequious royalists to whose consideration I now turn.

Gaius Velleius Paterculus, a Campanian, and descended from the Decius Magius who opposed the surrender of the city to Hannibal,¹ came of a family of soldiers² and himself, after serving with a commission in Thrace, Macedon, and the East, fought under Tiberius in his Danube and Rhine campaigns.³ In A.D. 14 he was one of the candidates recommended for the praetorship by Tiberius,⁴ whose panegyric he published sixteen years later, in the form of a history of Rome from the earliest times, which, by giving special prominence to the characterization of the leading figures, ensured that the reader should pass naturally and easily from the long gallery of portraits into the cabinet which he had reserved for the founders of the empire and their present representative.

This work, dedicated to one of the consuls of the year, Vinicius, who stood high enough in the emperor's favour to be chosen by him three years later as husband for his grand-daughter Julia,⁵ starts in the form in which we have it in the middle of a sentence forming part of an account of the adventures that befel various heroes after the fall of Troy. A brief summary of early Greek and Oriental history brings us, in Chapter

¹ See 1. 7. 2, 2. 16. 2.

² See 2. 115. 1 (brother), 104. 3 (father), 76. 1 (grandfather), 16. 2 (great-great-grandfather).

³ For his service see 2. 101. 2, 104. 3, III. 3, II4. 2.

⁴ 2. 124. 4.

⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 6. 15. The dedicatory words have vanished in the lacuna of which mention will be presently made, but Velleius frequently dates events by the number of years that have intervened between them and his patron's consulate: cp. e.g. 1. 8. 1 *ante annos quam tu, M. Vinici, consulatum inires DCCCXXIII*.

Eight, to the foundation of Rome and the administrative measures of Romulus ; then, owing to the loss of numerous pages in some early MS., we get a sentence of which the beginning refers to the rape of the Sabines, and the end to the war with Perses, waged some 600 years later. This mutilated Book One is not a sixth of the length of Book Two, but carries us up to the fall of Carthage and Corinth. Forty chapters of Book Two bring us to Caesar's consulship (59 B.C.), the next sixteen to his assassination (44 B.C.), twenty-eight more to Actium (31 B.C.). Of the remaining forty-seven only eight are occupied by the actual reign of the hero Tiberius, and two of these are reserved for the praises of the infamous Sejanus, an instance, Velleius thinks, of the Roman tendency to accept moral excellence as the equivalent of noble birth!¹ But the fact is that Tiberius' panegyric begins some thirty chapters back, with the mention of his introduction to public life in 23 B.C.,² from which point the figure of Augustus is distinctly dwarfed by that of his lieutenant. When the latter retires to Rhodes, the world realizes that Rome has lost her guardian ; if he celebrates but three triumphs, it is because he does not care to claim the seven that are his due ; if he counts only as second in the State, it is because he himself will have it so.³ No hint of any strain between stepson and stepfather : the retirement to Rhodes is due to the chivalrous desire to give the young princes, Gaius and Lucius, a free hand,⁴ and nothing could be more touching (or, if

¹ 128. 1 *neque nouus hic mos senatus populi que Romani est putandi quod optimum sit esse nobilissimus.* ² 94. 3.

³ 100. 1, 122. 1, 99. 1 (*ciuium post unum, et hoc quia uolebat, eminentissimus*).

⁴ 99. 2 *ne fulgor suus orientium iuuenum obstaret initiis.*

the evidence of Tacitus counts for aught, more imaginative) than the death-bed scene in which Augustus, revived by the sight of his dear Tiberius, flings his arms about him, begs him to undertake the burden of which he has already borne part, feels that death is robbed of its terrors, and is duly 'resolved into his first elements and *in the consulship of Pompeius and Apuleius* rendered up to heaven his immortal soul.' ¹

The bathos involved by this insertion of the cumbrous Roman date into the midst of an ambitious period is characteristic of the work of this old colonel, who, without very much equipment for the task, has made up his mind to be one of Rome's stylists. How anxious he is to be recognized as no mere chronicler is excellently revealed by an entertaining passage in his account of Julius Caesar's captivity with the pirates.² The great man's demeanour, he tells us, was such as to inspire these desperadoes with mingled fear and awe. 'Never once, day or night,' he begins, to break off with an apologetic parenthesis: 'Why should one omit an important fact just because it can't be described in elegant language?' The scientific mind is apt to echo the question, but Roman critics saw nothing ridiculous in it: they knew that there were certain 'sordid' words which were not ordinarily admitted into the society of decent, literary prose, and if anybody, for one reason or another, thought fit to break the rule, he had better let people know that he was not doing so through ignorance. The precaution duly taken, Velleius acquaints us with

¹ 123. 2. *in sua resolutus initia Pompeio Apuleioque consulibus septuagesimo et sexto anno animam caelestem caelo reddidit.*

² 2. 41. 3.

his guilty secret—all that time Caesar never *unbooted or unbelted*.¹

As a matter of fact, most of the characteristic features of the Silver style are to be found in this first extant specimen of post-Augustan prose. Many of the points are of course hopelessly puerile, though few fall as low as the comment on the funeral of that Scipio who was found dead in his bed with marks upon his throat that suggested strangulation, so that 'the body of him that had lifted Rome's head above the world was carried out with its own head covered.'² On the other hand, there are epigrams that would not disgrace a Tacitus, and it is on these I prefer to dwell—'The path to which precedents gain admittance may be narrow: they soon find ways of roaming abroad'; 'Curio, a fellow that made a fine art of profligacy'; 'Vatinius, whose mind seemed housed only too appropriately in his body'; 'Livia, whose influence no man felt save to have peril removed or honours increased.'³ The characterizations, too, exhibit no small degree of that gift for psychological observation with which reigns of terror compensate their victims. Those of Drusus, Pompey, and Varus⁴ seem to me particularly worthy of notice. One feature of Velleius' style, and a very unpleasant one, is certainly not characteristic of his age: I mean his tendency to indulge in enormous concatenations (*not periods*)

¹ L.c. *neque unquam aut nocte aut die (cur enim quod uel maximum est, si narrari uerbis speciosius non potest, omittatur?) aut excalcearetur aut discingeretur.*

² 2. 4. 6.

³ 2. 3. 4 *non enim ibi consistunt exempla unde coeperunt, sed quamlibet in tenuem recepta tramitem latissime euagandi sibi uiam faciunt*; 48. 3 *homo ingeniosissime nequam*; 69. 4 *adeo ut animus eius dignissimo domicilio inclusus uideretur*; 130. 5 *cuius potentiam nemo sensit nisi aut leuatione periculi aut accessione dignitatis.*

⁴ 2. 13. 1; 29. 2-5; 117. 2.

produced by the simple device of stringing together clauses that have little or no connexion with each other and mixing therewith a few parentheses (whose function is often enough simply that of conveying information that was omitted in its proper place). I venture to give a literal version of one of these curiosities of literary eczema.

Caesar, scion of the noble Julian house, descendant (as all antiquarians agree) of Anchises and Venus . . . one whose soul rose above the limits of man's nature, and indeed his powers of belief, one who in breadth of imagination, rapidity of strategy, and indifference to danger reminds us most of Alexander—but an Alexander neither drunken nor passionate, one who ever made of food and sleep a means to existence, not enjoyment, as a blood-relation of Marius and son-in-law to Cinna (whose daughter no threats could induce him to divorce, though a Piso, who had been consul, out of consideration for Sulla, put away Annia, a former wife of Cinna's—and Caesar was about eighteen when Sulla became dictator), finding that not so much Sulla himself as Sulla's underlings and adherents were hunting for him in order to slay him, put on as a disguise garments ill-suited to his rank and escaped under cover of night from Rome.¹

These sentences are the outcome, not of slovenliness, but of misapplied ingenuity. They have, in fact, something in common with the metrical irregularities which Ovid admits into his later elegiacs. The exile of Tomi wishes his reader to infer from these blemishes the extent to which his sojourn in outlandish regions is demoralizing his genius: Velleius means to remind us that he is giving a sort of prose *silva*, a hasty sketch the momentum of which, as he once definitely states, 'like some whirling wheel or downward rushing swirl of current' permits not a moment's pause,²

¹ 2. 41. 1, 2.

² 1. 16. 1 *in hac tam praecipiti festinatione quae me rotæ proniue gurgitis ac uerticis modo nusquam patitur consistere.*

and some of the deficiencies of which will be made good in the more substantial work which he often promises to write.¹ Such a programme may induce us to overlook his cavalier treatment of constitutional points, his dislike for descriptions of campaigns and battles, his silence as to divergency of accounts, his general inadequacy on various matters which even the ancients regarded as belonging to the province of the historian; it affords no excuse for the lack of proportion that gives eight lines to the suppression of the pretender in Macedon by Metellus, and twenty-three to the description of a colonnade erected by that general, of a group of statuary that he placed therein, and of the wonderful felicity which he enjoyed, that finds room, in an account of the death of Tiberius Gracchus, in which not a word is said of the senate's activity,² to note that the Opimius who crushed the revolutionary party is the man who gave his name to a famous vintage, of which, as this all happened a hundred and fifty years ago, there can be no bottles now surviving.³ There are longer digressions than this, and, in particular, two on the colonies and provinces of Rome (occupying each a couple of chapters⁴) and three on literary questions. In the first of these⁵ Velleius takes stock of the chief writers and orators of a period that extends, roughly, from the days of Scipio the younger to the civil wars of Sulla and Marius; in the second, he does the same for one that represents the combination of the Ciceronian and Augustan ages.⁶ Out of place though

¹ 2. 48. 5, 96. 3, 99. 3.

² 1. 11. 1, 2.

³ 2. 7. 5 *hic est Opimius a quo consule celeberrimum Opimiani uini nomen—quod iam nullum esse spatio annorum colligi potest.*

⁴ 1. 14 and 15, 2. 38 and 39.

⁵ 2. 9.

⁶ 2. 36.

such things may be in what purports to be a mere outline, we cannot but welcome the spirit prompting their compilation, regrettable though it be that the colonel, misled doubtless by what he heard in court circles, omits Horace and couples with the name of the author of the *Aeneid* the very minor poet Rabirius.¹ Each of these pieces occupies a chapter; the third extends over two, and is so exceptionally interesting that I feel bound to give a version of it :

I cannot resist the temptation to state here a problem which I have often pondered, without ever succeeding in clearing it up. Can we sufficiently express the strangeness of the fact that in each branch (*of literature or art*) the leading intellects have taken the same cast and foregathered in the same brief period? That, just as animals of various kinds, when shut up together in a cage or enclosure, nevertheless gather in groups, each standing aloof from members of another species, so the men of genius in any particular one of the great arts are distinguished from its other votaries by the fact that they are roughly of the same date and roughly of the same excellence. The period of a human life—and no long one either—saw tragedy become brilliant through men of more than mortal genius, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; another such period did the same for the Old Comedy, under the hands of Cratinus, Aristophanes, and Eupolis. Menander, with Philemon and Diphilus (as close to him in workmanship as they were in date), produced the New Comedy and left it perfect beyond all possibility of imitation, all within the space of a very few years. The philosophers again, whose stream descends from the lips of Socrates, and whose names I enumerated just now, how long after the death of Plato and Aristotle did they flourish? What great name is there in eloquence before Isocrates or after his pupils and theirs? So narrow the period here that every one that merits mention might have seen or been seen by his fellows.

¹ L.c. § 3 *inter quae maxime nostri aevi eminent princeps carminum Vergilius Rabiriusque.*

And this holds good for Rome as much as Greece. Unless you go back to rough, tyro performances, praiseworthy only as pioneer work, Roman tragedy means Accius and his contemporaries, and the brilliant period of the pleasant humour of Latin comedy was due to Caecilius, Terence, and Afranius—all of about the same age. So with the historians: reckon Livy to the age preceding ours, and (apart from Cato and some early and little-known writers) they are the outcome of barely eighty years—and the productive period of poetry goes back no earlier and comes down no later. As for the eloquence of statesman or barrister, the perfect form of prose expression, I maintain, with apologies to Crassus, Scipio, Laelius, the Gracchi, Fannius, and Galba, that, leaving Cato again out of the reckoning, the time of general efflorescence is that of its chief representative Cicero. Very few of his predecessors give pleasure, and there is not an orator who deserves respect but what either he may have seen Cicero or Cicero him. And any one who studies chronology will find the same thing applies to grammar, sculpture, and painting: the best period of each art is comprised within very narrow limits of time.

I often try to find reasons for this phenomenon . . . but find none in whose correctness I feel confidence, some that are perhaps probable, and, in particular, these. Emulation it is that encourages talent: sometimes envy, sometimes admiration, fires the desire to imitate. Now Nature ordains that that which is the object of the highest endeavour shall reach the highest level; perfection is not easily maintained, and it is a law of Nature that what cannot go forward must go back. At the outset we are hot to catch up those we reckon ahead of us, but, once we abandon hope of passing or equalling them, with our hope dies our interest: it ceases to aim at a goal it can never attain, regards this particular province as now appropriated, and looks round for a new one.¹

Velleius seems to have shared the ill fame of his hero. He is occasionally cited by scholiasts and

¹ I. 16. 17.

grammarians, and was to some extent imitated by Sulpicius Severus. His work must have been very rare in the Middle Ages, and men like John of Salisbury and Petrarch show no acquaintance with it. In 1515 the Tacitus scholar Beatus Rhenanus discovered a MS. in the Abbey of Murbach, from a copy of which he five years later produced the *editio princeps*. Both MSS. are lost, and the only one now known to be in existence is a copy of Beatus' copy. Even after he is printed, Velleius is seldom quoted. Ascham cites his verdict upon Cicero,¹ Chapman his reference to Homer; ² Temple's recognition of him as 'the last strain of the height and purity of Roman style' must have amused Bentley, though even Johnson once classes him with authors of 'the purest ages.' De Quincey, Goethe, and Ste. Beuve appreciate the excursus which I have translated, and Macaulay allows that the work is skilfully constructed. To the scientific historian it is of course anathema.

With Velleius must be coupled Valerius Maximus, who accompanied his patron Sextus Pompeius, friend of Ovid and consul in A.D. 14,³ when he proceeded as governor to Asia about A.D. 27,⁴ and who published, under Tiberius, at some time later than the fall of Sejanus in A.D. 31,⁵ a collection of *exempla* or historical illustrations for the use of authors and orators, compiled, the preface says, from the very best authorities. The *Noteworthy Doings and Sayings* comprises nine books; much of the first has reached us only in abridged texts, the common ancestor of our MSS.

¹ Vell. 2. 66. 5.

² Vell. 1. 5. 2.

³ Ov. *Pont.* 4. 1, 4, 5 and 16 are addressed to Pompeius, for whose career see *Prosop. Imp. Rom.* 3, p. 64.

⁴ Val. Max. 2. 6. 8.

⁵ The attack on his memory in 9. 11 Ext. 4 proves this.

of the work itself having sustained serious damage in this portion. Each book is divided into sections, of which there are ninety-five in all, each with a special heading. Book One, orthodoxly enough, is concerned with matters religious and divine, portents, dreams, and miracles, Book Two mainly with old institutions and constitutional lore. After that, connexion between neighbouring sections is only occasional, as, for example, in Book Nine, which starts with eleven sections dealing with various vices, and ends up with 'remarkable likenesses' and 'fraudulent attempts to claim connexion with illustrious families.' Within the sections non-Roman anecdotes are reserved to the end, but not every section has these.

There can be few books that illustrate more clearly the vast difference between modern and ancient practice as regards the naming of sources. Whence the Greek lore comes is uncertain, but most of the Roman anecdotes come unquestionably from Cicero, Livy, and Sallust. Yet in the twenty-six passages in which an authority is named, no one is mentioned twice except Theopompus,¹ Sallust not at all. Ten of these citations occurring within the space of a single section,² one can hardly doubt that Valerius has not specially consulted the authorities concerned, but simply taken them over from his *immediate* source. Varro, Nepos, and Hyginus probably supplied him with much material, but only the first of them is ever cited.³ For one incident, the suicide of a lady in the island of Ceos, he himself vouches as an eyewitness.⁴

The style of Valerius in the narratives somewhat resembles that of the elder Seneca ; in the introductions

¹ 8. 13. Ext. 5, 14 Ext. 5.

³ 3. 2. 24.

² 8. 13 Ext.

⁴ 2. 6. 8.

and moralizing passages with which he loves to wind up an anecdote or a section, it is heavy and pompous almost to obscurity. The points are mostly obvious and feeble, whilst one soon wearies of such efforts to provide graceful transition from one story to another as 'One is loth to leave Publicola, but glad to reach Camillus,' 'Spain thus testifies to Scipio's self-control, Epirus, Achaea, the Cyclades to that of Cato,' 'An episode that of olden time, this of ours.'¹ The flattery of Tiberius is by no means confined to the preface; as already noted,² we are spared the praises of Sejanus, who is attacked with a bitterness that might serve as commentary to Juvenal's famous picture of his fall.

Valerius is named as a source by Pliny and (rare honour for a Roman) the Greek Plutarch, Gellius borrows an anecdote (with acknowledgment of the source), and Lactantius in his *Institutiones* owes him a good deal.³ The abridgments by Paris and Neoptolemus are generally assigned to the fourth century, the two chief MSS. to the ninth, when the learned abbot Servatius Lupus did much for the text. During the Middle Ages and Renaissance the vogue of Valerius is equalled perhaps only by Cicero and Seneca among prose writers. The legend of the Good Daughter (one of Rubens' favourite subjects) is told from him⁴ in the *Gesta Romanorum*, Petrarch derived from him the plan of his *Res Memorandae*, but rebukes one of his correspondents for styling him 'first of moral writers.'⁵ Chaucer names and uses him, especially in the *Wife*

¹ 4. 1. 2, 3. 2; 5. 5. 3.

² See p. 147.

³ See the indices to *Nat. Hist.* 7 and 33; Plut. *Marcell.* 30, *Brut.* 53; Gell. 12. 7. 8; for Lactantius see Kempf's edition of Valerius, p. 45.

⁴ 5. 4. Ext. 1.

⁵ *Epist. de reb. fam.* 4. 15.

of *Bath* items, Rabelais uses the section on strange deaths, Elyot translates several anecdotes in the *Governour*, Montaigne tells, without naming his source, the story of the Cean lady.¹

Aufidius Bassus, possibly the same as the man of advanced years described by Seneca in a letter written about A.D. 65,² published at least part of his history before the death of Seneca's father, who quotes his account of the end of Cicero.³ The work to which the elder Pliny wrote a continuation and Cassiodorus had recourse in the sixth century has not reached us.⁴ If Seneca's quotation came from it, it must obviously have gone back as far as 43 B.C. Where it ended is quite uncertain, for Pliny's continuation is lost. But it can hardly have ended with the death of an emperor, or that writer would surely have entitled his work 'From the death of such and such an emperor,' and not 'From the conclusion of Aufidius Bassus.' Quintilian approves of Bassus⁵ as a stylist, and notes that he upheld the dignity of history 'especially in his *German War*.' This must have been quite a distinct work from that which Pliny continued: the part which Tiberius and Drusus must have played in it would make it an equally acceptable offering for the former himself, or the latter's grandson Caligula, or his son Claudius.

The elder Seneca wrote a history that started with

¹ *Essais* 2. 3.

² 30. 1.

³ *Suas.* 6. 18 *Cicero, paulum remoto uelo postquam armatos uidit, 'ego uero consisto' ait: 'accede, ueterane, et si hoc saltem potes recte facere, incide ceruicem.'* trementi deinde dubitantique 'Quid si ad me' inquit 'primum uenissetis?'

⁴ For Pliny see p. 160; Cassiodorus mentions the book as a source for his *Chronica*.

⁵ *Quint.* 10. 1. 103 *quam (historiae auctoritatem) Bassus Aufidius egregie, utique in libris belli Germanici, praestitit.*

the beginning of the civil wars and came down to a period not long preceding his death.¹ From it, no doubt, comes the account of the death of Tiberius for which Suetonius² cites the authority of a Seneca :

Realizing that he was failing he took off his signet-ring, as though intending to deliver it over to somebody, but after holding it awhile he set it back on his finger and lay there a long time perfectly still, with his left hand clenched. Then he suddenly called to his attendants and, receiving no answer, got out of bed, but had not gone far when his strength failed him and he collapsed.

—a version more likely to be current in official circles under Caligula than that which Tacitus has given us !³

The Emperor Claudius continued, after his accession to the purple, those activities as a historian to which Livy had impelled him in youth. When the great work in forty-one books, starting with the end of the civil wars, was *published*, it is impossible to say : Suetonius implies that he began it not long after he had written two books of a history beginning with the death of Caesar, which he then abandoned, the protests of his grandmother Livia and his mother Antonia, daughter of Antonius and Octavia, having convinced him of the inadvisability of attempting to tread such dangerous ground.⁴ Livia died in A.D. 29, so that this work must have belonged to the period between that year and the death of Augustus in A.D. 14.

¹ So we are informed by a fragment of the biography which his son wrote (Peter, *Hist. Rom. Fragm.* p. 292).

² *Tib.* 73.

³ *Ann.* 6. 50.

⁴ Suet. *Claud.* 41 *initium sumpsit historiae post caedem Caesaris dictatoris, sed et transiit ad inferiora tempora coepitque a pace civili, cum sentiret neque libere neque uere sibi de superioribus tradendi potestatem relictam, correptus saepe et a matre et ab auia. prioris materiae duo uolumina, posterioris unum et quadraginta reliquit.*

The first *recitatio* given by this imperial historian proved a failure, partly from bad luck, but partly through his own incorrigible levity of character. During the performance, which was attended by a large company, 'some one's fatness,' as Suetonius crudely puts it, caused some benches to collapse. A scene of general merriment ensued, and even when this had subsided, the prince kept interrupting his reading with bursts of laughter, and, naturally, found some difficulty in getting his audience to hear him out.¹ The elder Pliny and Suetonius both cite his historical writings,² but none of them has reached us.

To Claudius' reign probably belongs the *History of Alexander* of Quintus Curtius Rufus. It is undoubtedly a Silver production, but there is a certain restraint and simplicity about its style that suggests composition under either Claudius or Vespasian. Either of these might conceivably be the emperor who saved Rome in a stormy hour, of which Curtius is reminded by the scene of confusion that followed upon Alexander's death, and who, he declares,

rose like some new star of the night that was so nearly our last, whose coming, not the sun's, it surely was that brought light to a dark, bewildered (*caliganti*) world, whose parts had, with their head, lost all purpose, all harmony ;³

but these words surely tally best with Suetonius' picture of the scenes that followed the assassination of Gaius, with its wavering praetorians and vacillating senate,⁴ nor is the suggestion that the word *caliganti* is chosen with some reference to the emperor's surname

¹ Suet. l.c.

² Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 12. 78; Suet. *Claud.* 21.

³ 10. 9. 3 *qui noctis quam paene supremam habuimus nouum sidus inluxit.* (4) *huius hercule, non solis ortus lucem caliganti reddidit mundo, cum sine suo capite discordia membra trepidarent.*

⁴ Suet. *Claud.* 10.

Caligula an entirely wild one. Of course, if the Curtius Rufus whom Suetonius names among the rhetors is our historian, there can be no doubt that he flourished before Vespasian became emperor, for Suetonius' list, which is chronological, places him between the teachers of Ovid and Persius.¹

Certainly, of all rhetorical histories that have reached us, this is the most rhetorical. Curtius has definitely turned his back on the sober and reliable accounts of Alexander which were at his disposal, two of them compiled by the Macedonian's own generals, Ptolemy and Aristobulus, to follow the methods of Clitarchus, whose notoriously imaginative work was more romance than history. The likeness between this man's standpoint and that of Curtius comes out clearly in the attraction both feel for the romantic episode of their hero's sojourn with the Amazon queen, which was ridiculed by the two soldiers.² On both the occasions when Curtius condescends to mention authorities,³ he names Clitarchus, but Clitarchus was certainly not his only source, as in one of the passages he quotes Timagenes, a writer of the Augustan age, whose views he cannot have found recorded in the fourth-century historian. On the other hand, it is quite possible that he never read Clitarchus at all, nor Ptolemy (whom he quotes in this same passage), but simply reproduced the statements which he found ascribed to them in Timagenes. We have already seen Valerius Maximus doing this kind of thing, and we shall presently see that the elder Pliny's ideas

¹ *De Rhet.* 9.

² Curt. 6. 5. 24 *sqq.* Plutarch (*Alex.* 46) says that Clitarchus had the story, which Ptolemy and Aristobulus stigmatized as an invention.

³ 9. 5. 21 (where Ptolemy and Timagenes are also named), 9. 8. 15.

of morality were no higher.¹ But one must admit that the evidence is not convincing against Curtius, and I much prefer to believe that he read over various accounts and selected from them whatever he thought most susceptible of the kind of treatment in which he excels, anticipated, in fact, the methods generally adopted by modern writers of the historical novel. Very characteristic is the passage which describes the meeting of Alexander with a train of Greeks who have been held captive for many years and subjected to horrible mutilations at Persepolis.² The episode is wholly ignored by Arrian, and only sketched by Diodorus and Justin: it perhaps reminded Curtius of one of the declamations, the fourth of Seneca's tenth book, which has for theme the fate of children who, abandoned by their parents, were picked up by speculators, maimed, and sent out to beg, it being understood that they must bring back a certain sum 'to defray the expense of their keep.' Anyhow, the speeches delivered by two of the unfortunates at a meeting called to decide the form which their appeal to Alexander shall take, with their development of the arguments for and against the return to Greece,³ are strongly reminiscent of the schools. Another speech, that with which the Scythian ambassadors address Alexander in Book Seven, is simply one of those popular diatribes on a philosophic theme which Seneca tells us some declaimers loved to introduce into their speeches:

Knowest thou not that great trees are long growing,
but are uprooted in an hour? He that thinks of their fruit

¹ See pp. 148, 304.

² 5. 5. 5 *sqq.*: cp. Diod. 17. 69, Justin, 11. 14. 11.

³ §§ 10-16, 17-20.

and gauges not their height is a fool. Look to it lest, in thy efforts to reach the summit, thou fall with the very branches that thou hast grasped. The lion too, ere now, hath been the meat of tiny birds, and rust eateth iron : nought so strong but it may be in danger from even a puny thing. . . . Why, thou that vauntest thou art come to punish brigands hast thyself played brigand unto all the peoples thou hast visited. Thou hast taken Lydia and seized Syria, thou holdest Persia and hast the Bactrians in thrall ; to India hast thou fared and art now stretching forth hands greedy and insatiable upon our herds. What use in riches that constrain thee to go fasting ? Thou art the first that hath got hunger out of repletion, the more thou hast, craving the more fiercely what thou hast not. Doth it never strike thee how long thou hast been boggling over Bactra, and whilst thou art conquering them, the Sogdiani have begun war. War is the fruit that victory bears thee. . . . Such as thou hast not warred on, thou wilt be able to make good friends of them. For betwixt equals is friendship most staunch, and such as have not yet made trial of each other's strength are looked upon as equals. But those thou hast conquered, never deem them friends : betwixt master and slave there can be no friendship ; even in time of peace, the footing will be that of war. Think not that Scythians confirm their goodwill with an oath : their oath is—to keep faith. . . . 'Tis they that respect not men that break faith with the gods. And what use is there in a friend of whose well-wishing thou art not sure ? ¹

As a novelist, Curtius is handicapped by his inability to draw character : his kings and queens and warriors are the puppet figures of the declamation and Senecan tragedy. But he has charm, and is, as has been said already, comparatively free from extravagance and mannerism : it would be difficult to name any author of our period who lends himself so well to anything like continuous reading. Admiration for Livy leads him to echo that writer's turns and phrases, but he is

¹ 7. 8. 14 *sqq.*

proof against the seduction of his high-built periods, having himself discovered the secret of a sentence that is brief without being staccato. To some extent one may regard his book as the forerunner of the novel with a purpose: as Seneca and the Stoics in general have seen in Alexander the type of the man who conquers the world but is slave of his own passions, so more than once Curtius seems to invite us to note the effect of little deserved prosperity upon a character naturally generous, but bereft of that strength which only philosophic training can impart.¹

Oddly enough, Seneca is the only classical writer who shows anything that looks like reminiscence of Curtius.² And Suetonius, if indeed his Curtius is ours, is the only one who mentions him. The fact that Quintilian ignores him, which has led some (and Gibbon among them) to believe that he cannot have written under Claudius, is of no great importance. The professor does not mention the universal history of Trogus: it is even possible that he omits Curtius, as he omits Petronius, as a writer of romance. Traces of our author begin to appear in the time of Charlemagne when Einhart copies him, and the earliest of our MSS. were written. Unfortunately, the first two books have been lost, and there are other gaps.

¹ Cp. 4. 6. 29 *ira deinde uertit in rabiem, iam tum peregrinos ritus noua subeunte fortuna*, 9. 10. 24 *animo super humanum fastigium elato*, 10. 5. 26 *iuste aestimantibus regem liquet bona naturae eius fuisse, uitia uel fortunae uel aetatis*.

² Cp. 7. 1. 4 *prudens otii uitia negotio discuti* with Sen. *Ep.* 56. 9 *nihil tam certum est quam otii uitia negotio discuti*, 7. 3. 5 *nationem ne finitimis quidem satis notam* with *Ep.* 59. 12 *gentes ne finitimis quidem satis notas*, 8. 10. 29 *cum crus saucium penderet et cruore siccato frigescens uulnus adgrauaret dolorem, dixisse fertur se quidem Iouis filium dici*, sed, etc., with *Ep.* l.c. (of the same incident) *cum represso sanguine sicci uolneris dolor cresceret et crus suspensum equo paulatim obtorpuisset, . . . 'omnes' inquit 'iurant esse me Iouis filium,' etc.*

With the twelfth century Curtius becomes quite popular, and some of the Alexander romances now beginning to appear make use of him. Not, apparently, the earliest of all, that of Alberic de Besançon, though it is on the blank pages of a Curtius MS. that the work itself has been preserved to us. But his influence upon Alexandre de Bernay and Gautier de Lille is unmistakable. Petrarch's copy, preserved at Paris, shows many traces of his annotating hand. About 1425, Niccolò da Cusa assured Poggio that he had found a MS. containing the commencement of the work, but he seems to have been mistaken. Elyot acutely couples the book with Xenophon's equally imaginative account of the upbringing of Cyrus.¹ Racine acknowledges the debt of his own Alexander play to Book Eight, and Voltaire assures us that the whole work was a favourite with Charles the Twelfth of Sweden. He was not the first king it had pleased, as we are told that Alphonse the Tenth of Spain, falling ill and getting no good of his doctors, took a course of Curtius and was cured.

The historians between Curtius and Tacitus are represented to us by only the scantiest, dullest of fragments. But the influence some of them had, or are thought to have had, upon Tacitus, the references to them in extant literature, and other considerations, make it necessary to say something about them.

Marcus Servilius Nonianus, the friend of Persius,² was consul in A.D. 35,³ and died in A.D. 59.⁴ As we do not hear of his having written anything but history, it was probably an historical work he was 'reading' when Claudius paid him the unexpected visit of

¹ *Governour* I. II.

³ *Tac. Ann.* 6. 31.

² See p. 66.

⁴ *Tac. Ann.* 14. 19.

which a letter of Pliny's has preserved some details.¹ Quintilian holds his style too luxuriant for the subject, but both he and Tacitus regard him as a writer of mark.²

Cluvius Rufus, who was consul probably under Caligula,³ was on intimate terms with Nero, whom indeed he served as herald on the occasion of his musical performances.⁴ Under Galba he was governor of a Spanish province,⁵ which he left in order to support Vitellius. He joined that emperor in the course of his journey to Italy,⁶ and was present with Silius at the interview between him and Sabinus in A.D. 69.⁷ The fact that the version of this given by Tacitus refers merely to report, not Cluvius' own account, makes it probable that his history did not cover the reign of Vitellius. On the other hand, the use of it by Tacitus and Plutarch⁸ and Pliny's story of the author's apology to Verginius Rufus for having stated the truth even when it might not be palatable to the victor of Vesontio⁹ make it clear that it dealt at least with the reign of Nero and the events immediately following thereon.

Fabius Rusticus is occasionally cited for events that occurred under Nero by Tacitus,¹⁰ who says he was

¹ I. 13. 3 *memoria parentum Claudium Caesarem ferunt, cum in Palatio spatiaretur audissetque clamorem, causam requisisse, cumque dictum esset recitare Nonianum, subitum recitanti inopinatumque uenisse.*

² Quint. 10. 1. 102 *clari uir ingenii et sententiis creber, sed minus pressus quam historiae auctoritas postulat*, Tac. Ann. 14. 19 *tradendis rebus Romanis celebris.*

³ See Joseph. *Antiq.* 19. 13 (§ 91).

⁴ Suet. *Ner.* 21; Dio 63. 14.

⁵ Tac. *Hist.* 2. 65.

⁶ Tac. Ann. 13. 20, 14. 2; Plut. *Oth.* 3.

⁷ Ep. 9. 19. 5. Verginius replied that it was in order to secure the historians such liberty that he had played the part he had.

¹⁰ Ann. 13. 20, 14. 2, 15. 61.

⁵ Tac. *Hist.* 1. 8.

⁷ See p. 28.

a protégé of Seneca's and showed partiality to the philosopher.¹ In the *Agricola*² he is coupled with Livy as the best stylist of the modern, as the other was of the old, school of history. The mysterious historian whom Quintilian³ styles the glory of his day, but refuses to name as still living, must presumably have published some historical work before such a eulogy could be penned, cannot therefore have been Tacitus, but might easily enough be either Cluvius or Fabius.

The elder Pliny's *History of the Wars of Germany* was begun when he was serving in that country,⁴ and may have been published under Claudius. It is, however, by no means certain that it was, and it seems most convenient to speak of the work under the Flavian dynasty, which saw the completion of the *Natural History* and the history in continuation of Aufidius. It has perished, and the only certain fragment is a statement concerning Agrippina preserved by Tacitus;⁵ the details as to the exact whereabouts of Caligula's birthplace, for which Suetonius claims Pliny's authority,⁶ were probably drawn from it. The author's nephew informs us that it contained in twenty books an account of all Rome's wars with the Germans.⁷ In the fourth century Symmachus promises to look for a copy for a friend, but does not seem to feel very sanguine of

¹ *Ann.* 13 l.c. *sane inclinât ad laudes Senecae, cuius amicitia floruit.*

² § 10 *Liuius ueterum, Fabius Rusticus recentium eloquentissimus.*

³ *IO. I. IO4 superest adhuc et exornat aetatis nostrae gloriam uir saeculorum memoria dignus, qui olim nominabitur, nunc intellegitur.*

⁴ *Plin. Ep. 3. 5. 4 'bellorum Germaniae XX. (libri), quibus omnia quae cum Germanis gessimus bella collegit: incohauit cum in Germania militaret.*

⁵ *Ann.* 1. 69.

⁶ *Cal.* 8.

⁷ *Plin. Ep. 3. 5. 4 (quoted above).*

success,¹ and we hear no more of the book until Renaissance times, when it figures among the books with hopes of which da Cusa tantalized Poggio. One or two subsequent attempts to prove the existence of MSS. containing it seem to have had no better justification.² The history that bore the title *From the Conclusion of Aufidius Bassus* ran to thirty-one books,³ and was kept unpublished so that no one could suspect the author of having made in it any bids for imperial favour.⁴ There doubtless he means the readers of the *Natural History* to find the account of Nero to which he twice refers them, thence doubtless Tacitus draws some statements, for which he makes Pliny responsible, in regard to incidents of Nero's reign (the earliest, one of A.D. 55), or the year A.D. 69.⁵ Far beyond this fateful date it cannot have gone, as its author speaks of it in the preface to the *Natural History*, penned in A.D. 77, as long since completed.⁶

And now for a glance at those humbler branches of our subject, Biography and the Memoir. Neither was unknown to republican times. Sulla had combined them in an autobiography. The first emperor wrote a thirteen-volume history of his life: even Agrippa found time to compile something of the sort. In our period both Tiberius and Claudius composed autobiographies, and although the former's was little more than a sketch,⁷ that of his nephew ran to eight books,

¹ *Ep.* 4. 18. 6.

² See M. Lehnerdt, *Ein verschollenes Werk des aelteren Plinius*, in *Hermes* 1913.

³ *Plin. Ep.* 3. 5. 6 'A fine Aufidi Bassi XXXI. (libri).'

⁴ *Plin. Nat. Hist.* praef. 20. uos omnes diximus opere iusto, temporum nostrorum historiam orsi a fine Aufidi Bassi. Ubi sit ea, quaeres? iam pridem peracta sancitur, et alioqui statutum erat heredi mandare, ne quid ambitioni dedisse uita iudicaretur.

⁵ *Plin. Nat. Hist.* 2. 199, 232; *Tac. Ann.* 13. 20, 15. 53; *Hist.* 3. 28.

⁶ See quotation in note 4.

⁷ *Suet. Tib.* 61.

in which silliness of matter was combined with some elegance of style.¹ The elder Pliny's life of his friend Pomponius² will not have been of much historical importance, but those of the great republicans Thræsea and Helvidius, edited by Arulenus Rusticus and Herennius Senecio respectively, covered ground less secure and cost their authors their lives.³ As for memoirs, one feels deeply the loss of Agrippina's, which are quoted by Tacitus and doubtless supplied Pliny with the details anent the birth of Nero for which he cites her testimony.⁴ This same Pliny's reference to Suetonius Paulinus as an authority upon the geography of the regions adjoining Mount Atlas⁵ makes it probable that he published a description of the war which he carried on in Mauretania during A.D. 42. That Corbulo did the same for his Armenian campaign of A.D. 55-63 is almost certain, that Tacitus used it freely, though he only once names him as an authority,⁶ quite probable. Pliny occasionally quotes him in connexion with Armenia.⁷ Vipstanus Messalla is twice cited by Tacitus in his account of the capture of Cremona in A.D. 69,⁸ and as he is never mentioned as a historian it is generally assumed that he wrote an account of the campaign of which that event was an episode. Josephus twice mentions the memoirs of Vespasian,⁹ but it is impossible to say whether they

¹ *Claud.* 41 *composuit et de uita sua VIII uolumina, magis inepte quam ineleganter.*

² *Plin. Ep.* 3. 5. 3.

³ *Tac. Agr.* 2. 1.

⁴ *Tac. Ann.* 4. 53 *id ego . . . repperi in commentariis Agrippinae quae . . . uitam suam et casus suorum posteris memorauit*; *Plin. Nat. Hist.* 7. 46 *Neronem . . . pedibus genitum scribit parens eius Agrippina.*

⁵ *Nat. Hist.* 5. 14.

⁶ *Ann.* 15. 16.

⁷ *Nat. Hist.* 2. 180, 5. 83 and especially 6. 23 and 40.

⁸ *Hist.* 3. 25 and 28. He commanded one of the Flavian legions.

⁹ *Joseph. Vita* 65 (=§ 342) *ἐν τοῖς Οὐεσπασιάνων τοῦ αὐτοκράτορος ὑπομνήμασιν.*

were concerned only with the Jewish war or had a more general scope. For convenience sake it seems best to mention here, along with the other works of its kind, Trajan's account of the Dacian wars, though it appeared after Tacitus had begun to write and so does not, strictly speaking, belong to this section. It comprised at least two books, and is quoted by Priscian.¹

(b) TACITUS

Our knowledge of Publius Cornelius Tacitus is derived mainly from his works and the letters of the younger Pliny. The latter's reference to him as one who though roughly his equal in age had already won his spurs when he himself was still a youth, shows that he was born not many years before A.D. 62,² and as he was praetor in A.D. 88, it is improbable that his birth occurred later than A.D. 58. Closer than this it seems impossible to fix it: the date generally accepted, 54 or 55, assumes that he was quaestor in 79-80, and this is not certain. If Tacitus wrote the *Dialogus*, then somewhere about A.D. 77 he was studying the methods of the barristers Aper and Secundus,³ and this was certainly the year in which Agricola promised him the hand of his daughter, the marriage taking place immediately before the general's appointment to Britain (? A.D. 78).⁴ Tacitus' statement that Vespasian started him on the road to honour⁵ may of course mean that he secured him his first important

¹ Priscian *Inst.* 6. 13 (*Gramm. Lat.* 2, p. 205) *Traianus in primo Dacicorum*.

² *Ep.* 7. 20. 4 quoted on p. 132⁶.

³ *Dial.* 2.

⁴ *Agr.* 9. 7.

⁵ *Hist.* 1. 1. *dignitatem nostram a Vespasiano inchoatam, a Tito auctam, a Domitiano longius prouectam non abnuerim.*

magistracy, the quaestorship, but it is equally possible that it refers to the grant of the laticlave, without which, if he belonged to the equestrian order, as did the procurator Cornelius Tacitus mentioned by the elder Pliny,¹ and generally regarded as a relative of the historian's, he could never have stood for such an office. He goes on to say that he gained promotion from Titus and Domitian, that is to say, first the quaestorship or, if he really held this under Vespasian, one of those two equivalent magistracies, the tribunate and aedileship, and then the praetorship, which we know him to have held, with the quindecimvirate, in A.D. 88.² Soon afterwards, it would seem, he left Rome, perhaps for a minor governorship: neither he nor his wife were there when Agricola died in A.D. 93, and he observes that they had really lost him four years before.³ On the other hand, the pictures of the senate, under the terror of Domitian's last years, suggest an eyewitness.⁴ For the funeral oration of A.D. 97, and the prosecution of Marius three years later, see p. 133. A Cornelius Tacitus, who is usually identified with the historian, was governor of Asia under Trajan,⁵ and a reference in the *Annals*⁶ to the extension of the Empire to the Persian Gulf must have been penned about A.D. 116.

¹ *Nat. Hist.* 7. 76.

² *Tac. Ann.* II. 11 *edidit (Domitianus) ludos saecularesisque intentius adfui, sacerdotio quindecimviri* (see p. 20) *praeditus ac tunc praetor.*

³ *Agr.* 45. 4 *mihi filiaeque eius . . . auget maestitiam quod adsidere valetudini, fouere deficientem, satiari uultu complexuque non contigit.* (5) . . . *nobis iam longae absentiae condicione ante quadriennium amissus est.*

⁴ *Agr.* 45. 1, 2.

⁵ See an inscription published in *Bulletin de corresp. hellén.*, 1890, p. 621.

⁶ 2. 61 *exim uentum Elephantinen ac Syenen, claustra olim Romani imperii, quod nunc rubrum ad mare patescit.*

Tacitus seems to have turned author rather late in life. Pliny's letters, arranged in roughly chronological order, presuppose the barrister only, until, some halfway through Book Six, we find that Tacitus has asked for details of the elder Pliny's death that will enable him to 'tell the story more correctly to future ages.'¹ Then, in Book Seven,² Pliny admits that his object in reminding Tacitus of something he did in A.D. 93 is to make sure of getting mentioned in his histories. All we know of the dates of publication of the extant works points the same way: none that is certainly his appeared before Domitian's death in 98 B.C. As for the *Dialogus*, Tacitus' reference in the *Agricola* preface to his powers as 'uncouth and prentice'³ satisfies me that he had certainly not yet written that work. It is, however, urged by those who are anxious to make it his first composition that as in the *Agricola* passage he is thinking mainly of the suppression of literature *under Domitian*, his words do not prove that he had not written anything *before* that emperor's régime, so that the *Dialogus* may perfectly well have appeared under Titus. The answer is, of course, that Titus died in 81, and the dramatic date of the dialogue is 77: it is inconceivable that even the most consummate of young prigs, professing to relate a discussion which had taken place at most four years previously, would remark, as the author of the *Dialogus* remarks, that he is reviving the memory of something that happened *when he was quite a young man*.⁴ Those, then, who explain this

¹ *Ep.* 6. 16. 1 (? 106 A.D.).

² *Ep.* 33. 3.

³ *Agr.* 3. 3 *non pigebit uel incondita ac rudi uoce memoriam prioris seruitutis ac testimonium praesentium bonorum composuisse.*

⁴ *Dial.* 1 *quos eandem hanc quaestionem pertractantes iuuenis admodum audiui.*

work as Tacitus' farewell to his old, and defence of his new, profession, written only a little later than the *Agricola*, may be guilty of indulging their imagination, but are at any rate doing no violence to the rules of common sense. *Agricola* and *Germania* are easily dated. The latter must belong to A.D. 98, the year of that second consulship of Trajan's from which its author reckons 210 years to the start of the Cimbrian invasions.¹ That the *Agricola* preceded it, is proved by the words already quoted from the preface to that work, but an allusion to Trajan as *emperor*² fixes it in the same year. The history of the Flavians came next: the actual date of publication cannot be even approximately fixed, but that it preceded the *Annals* appears from a reference Tacitus makes in that work to his account of Domitian.³ The title is not recorded by the MS., but the modern one, *Histories*, was probably that by which its author denoted it. Tertullian, in quoting from it,⁴ says, 'Tacitus in the fifth of his *histories*,' and as he must have known of the other great history, with its sixteen or more books, and was bound to make it clear which of the two he was citing, he must be using the word as a title, not simply in the generic sense the Latin word often bears, *historical work*. Last of all appeared the history of the Julio-Claudian line, the *Annals* as we call it, this time without justification. The Latin word *Annales* denotes simply a history that narrates events in strictly chronological order, year by year, and, this being the method Tacitus follows in

¹ *Germ.* 37. 2 *ex quo* (the 640th year of the city) *si ad alterum imperatoris Traiani consulatum computemus, ducenti ferme et decem anni colliguntur.*

² *Agr.* 44. 5.

³ *Ann.* II. II *utriusque principis rationes praetermitto, satis narratas libris quibus res imperatoris Domitiani composui.*

⁴ *Apol.* 16.

both works, Beatus Rhenanus, who applied the title to each of them impartially, had more reason on his side than Lipsius, who seems to be responsible for its reservation to the later one. There is really no reason why we should reject the title 'From the death of the deified Augustus,' offered by the MS. which has preserved the first half of it. It is certainly a very unwieldy one, so much so that the customary one has been retained in this book for the sake of convenience, but it is decidedly more natural than that of Pliny's continuation of Aufidius. The only hint the work contains of the date at which it was composed is the already mentioned statement pointing to A.D. 116 or later.

The *Agricola*, after three prefatory chapters, describes the hero's life from his birth to his consulship and his appointment as governor of Britain, and then, at Chapter Ten, passes to a description of Britain and its habitants, with some account of the invasion by Caesar, the occupation by Claudius, the gradual reduction by successive governors. All this occupies eight chapters, on which follows the account of Agricola's arrival, his prompt and successful raid upon Anglesey, his administrative measures, and the brilliant expeditions of six consecutive years. With the last of these, at Chapter Twenty-Nine, begins the account of the battle on the Graupian Mount, occupied mainly with the speeches made by the commanders on each side. With Chapter Thirty-Nine the shadows begin to fall: Agricola is recalled by the jealous emperor and escapes worse only by the exercise of his natural gifts of modesty and prudence. The account of his last illness and death follows, and then Tacitus, having pointed out the enviableness of a death that

saved his hero from the horrors of the Terror, the bitterness for himself and his wife of the thought that they had been unable to be with him at the end, concludes with the famous epilogue :

If there is some abode for the spirits of the righteous, if, as philosophers hold, great souls are not annihilated with their bodies, rest thou in peace and call us, thy house, from weak regret and womanish lamentings to the contemplation of thy virtues, over which to mourn or wail were sinful. Let us rather do thee honour by admiration, by praise everlasting, and, if our powers allow, by rivalry. . . . And this would I urge on thy daughter too, and thy wife—that they pay homage to the memory of husband and father by musing over all he said and did, by clinging to the lines and lineaments rather of his soul than of his body. Not that I think we should prohibit those likenesses that are wrought in marble or bronze. But, even as the human face is a thing frail and perishable, so are its counterfeit representations. The lines of the soul are everlasting, and one can catch them and reproduce them not by any material or skill which another furnishes, but only through the medium of one's own character.¹

The work is panegyric, not history, and even as a panegyric not a very satisfactory performance : there is a deal of truth in the criticism that has been passed on it to the effect that all it says, apart from the record of definite achievements, could have been said equally well of any Roman senator who had been an officer, a governor, a son, a father, and a father-in-law. It is interesting to note first glimpses of traits that become obtrusive in the later works, foremost among them the influence of Sallust. This is not confined to matters of language : the chapters on Britain, whilst they prepare us for those on Judaea

¹ *Agv.* 46. 1-3.

in the *Histories*, also remind us of the excursus on Africa which Sallust has inserted in the *Jugurtha* and to which his *Histories* no doubt provided some parallels. The author's tendency towards psychological analysis shows very clear in the picture of the precautions by which Agricola guards himself against the suspicion of Domitian.¹

The *Dialogus* and *Germania* are dealt with in Chapters Eleven and Twelve respectively. The *Histories* start with the first day of A.D. 69. Book One recounts the adoption of Piso by Galba, the murder of both by the praetorians who have set up Otho, the proclamation of Vitellius by the legions of Germany, Otho's administration up to the day when he marches north against his rival. Book Two describes Bedriacum and the suicide of Otho, Vitellius' progress into and through Italy, the proclamation of Vespasian by the East, the early part of Vitellius' rule. In Book Three Antonius Primus, acting for Vespasian, invades Italy, routs the Vitellians at Cremona, which he takes and sacks, and storms the capital: the death of Vitellius concludes this section. Book Four, in the course of which ² we pass to the year 70, is mainly concerned with the great rising of the Batavian auxiliaries. What is left of Book Five is about equally divided between the further progress of this war and the early stages of Titus' attack on Jerusalem.

The *Annals* recounted the fifty-five years that followed the death of Augustus: what is preserved to us covers about forty-two, and only a brief résumé is possible here. Book One devotes five chapters

¹ *Agr.* 42. 2, 3.

² *At c.* 39. 1.

to a sketch of the history of the Roman constitution and the reign of Augustus, with a short account of the emperor's last days ; the rest, and the five next books, deal with the rule of Tiberius, the chief items being the mutinies of the legions of Germany and Pannonia, the campaigns of Germanicus in the former country, his tragic death in the East and the machinations of Sejanus. Of that minister's fall we learn nothing, most of Book Five and the opening chapters of Book Six having been lost. So have Books Seven to Ten, involving the rule of Caligula and five or six years of that of Claudius ; and the mutilated condition of the MS. to which we now have to turn has deprived us of perhaps the first twenty chapters of Book Eleven. This has Messalina for main theme ; Book Twelve tells of the marriage with Agrippina, Nero's adoption, and the death of Claudius ; Book Thirteen of Nero's amours, the murder of Britannicus and Corbulo's appointment against the Parthians (the war with whom is described in detail in this and the next two books) ; Book Fourteen of the emperor's attempt on his mother's life, her execution as a traitor, the revolt of Boadicea, the divorce and execution of Octavia ; Book Fifteen of the great fire and the Piso conspiracy. The thirty-five chapters left of Book Sixteen contain little else than the series of prosecutions which culminates in that of Thrasea Paetus, the attempt, as Tacitus puts it, to 'extirpate virtue itself.'¹

Tacitus reckons it the prime function of history 'to ensure that virtue's story shall be told and the fear of posterity and disgrace attend on evil

¹ *Ann.* 16. 21 *ad postremum Nero uirtutem ipsam excindere concupiuit.*

deeds and speeches.' ¹ 'Not many,' he says elsewhere, ² 'can by their own wits tell good from bad, what is expedient from what is harmful. Most men get their knowledge of these matters from the experience of others. That is why it is worth while to write the record of these times.' He has a high conception of the dignity of history, and although he realizes how inglorious his subject is in comparison with those of the republicans and Livy, ³ only resents the more any attempt to vulgarize it. 'To look about for marvellous happenings and regale my readers with mere tales would be, to my thinking, to stray from the dignity of the task I have set myself,' he says in the *Histories*: ⁴ a passage in the *Annals* ⁵ is still more explicit—

One could fill volumes with the praise of the foundations laid and the timber used in the vast amphitheatre erected by the emperor, but it has been found more in accordance with the majesty of Rome to record in historical works events that are of signal importance and commit topics like these to the daily journals. ⁶

At the opening of the *Histories* Tacitus lays stress on the importance of impartiality, as indeed in that of the

¹ *Ann.* 3. 65 *quod praecipuum munus annalium reor, ne uirtutes sileantur utque prauis dictis factisque ex posteritate et infamia metus sit.*

² *Ann.* 4. 33 *haec conquiri tradique in rem fuerit, quia pauci prudentia honesta ab deterioribus, utilia ab noxiis discernunt, plures aliorum euentis docentur.*

³ *Ann.* 4. 32 *ingentia illi bella . . . aut, si quando ad interna praeuenterent, discordias consulum aduersum tribunos, agrarias frumentariasque leges, plebis et optimatum certamina . . . memorabant: nobis in arto et inglorius labor.*

⁴ 2. 50 *conquirere fabulosa et fictis oblectare legentium animos procul gravitate coepti operis crediderim.*

⁵ 13. 31.

⁶ *Cum ex dignitate populi Romani repertum sit res illustres annalibus, talia diurnis urbis actis mandare.*

*Annals*¹ he claims to be writing 'without animus or favour.' It was, however, impossible to keep his work entirely uncoloured by his strong admiration for Republican times, his pessimism, deep-rooted in the memory of the Terror, his aristocratic pride, that with all its scorn for contented proletariat and servile nobility finds little sympathy for the theatrical methods of the republican opposition, for even a good emperor little more than toleration, bred of the belief that the rule of an individual is inevitable in the evil days to which he is born.² It is hardly just, however, to say that he is blind to any point of view but that of the Roman conquerors of the world. Certainly the speech with which his Cerealis reproaches the Gauls who have joined the German Civilis is as one-sided as any native of Egypt or India might find the views of the most extreme of British imperialists—

'Twas through no selfishness that Rome's generals entered your land, but at the invitation of your ancestors, worn out almost to extinction by their factions, with the yoke of the Germans whom they had called to their aid laid impartially upon foes and allies alike. . . . We occupied the Rhine, not to protect Italy, but to prevent some fresh Ariovistus from making himself King of Gaul. Do you suppose that Civilis and the Batavi and the peoples across the Rhine love you any better than their ancestors

¹ *Sine ira et studio, quorum causas procul habeo.*

² In *Ann.* 14. 12 he notes that Thræsa by his attitude *sibi causam periculi, ceteris libertatis initium non praebeuit*, in *Agr.* 42. 5 remarks, à propos of the prudence displayed by his hero in his dealings with the emperor, *sciant quibus moris est illicita mirari, posse etiam sub malis principibus magnos uiros esse, obsequiumque ac modestiam, si industria ac uigor adsint, eo laudis excedere quo plerisque per abrupta, sed in nullum reipublicae usum, ambitiosa morte inclauuerunt.* No careful reader can deny that the words he puts in the mouth of Epius Marcellus (*Hist.* 4. 8 *se meminisse temporum quibus natus sit . . . ulteriora mirari, praesentia sequi; bonos imperatores uoto expetere, qualescunque tolerare*) nearly represent his own position.

loved your fathers and grandfathers? Ever the same motives are they that bring the Germans into Gaul—lust, greed, and the desire to migrate, that they may leave their marshes and deserts and hold in thrall this most fertile of lands and your own persons. Of course they gloss them over with the name of liberty and fine phrases: no one ever hoped to make other men his slaves and subjects but he used the same terms.

Tyranny and warfare were the order of the day in Gaul until you came under our jurisdiction: we, spite of the frequent provocations we had received, used the right of victory only to impose on you what would enable us to maintain peace. For peace cannot be kept in the world without armies, nor armies without pay, nor pay without taxation. In all other respects you share with us. Often enough you command our legions, rule provinces—here or elsewhere: there is nothing set apart or closed to you. . . . If Rome falls (which God forbid!) what can result but a world-war? Eight hundred years of good fortune and ordering has it taken this mighty fabric to set firm, and now it cannot be torn up without bringing destruction on those who make the attempt: You, however, it is that are most in danger, for you have in your possession the chief causes of war—gold and power.¹

And yet it would be difficult to name an ancient writer who has voiced more clearly the grievances of the provincials. The frankness of the speeches assigned to Calgacus or Civilis or the ambassadors of the Tenceteri² may be due to rhetorical rather than historical considerations: the declamation student was expected to plead both sides of a case. But the implications of the chapter on Agricola's reforms in Britain, and the plain story of the centurion's extortions with which Tacitus justifies the statement that a revolt was brought about 'rather by our Roman avarice than the contumacy of the provincials' cannot be

¹ *Hist.* 4. 73, 74.

² *Agr.* 30, *Hist.* 4. 14 and 64.

discounted thus.¹ That he never misleads us intentionally is generally agreed, but the reply to the question, 'Has he taken pains to make sure of not being himself misled?' is less unanimous. It must, of course, come in the negative from those who hold that in the *Histories* at any rate he has followed a single source so closely that his own contribution amounts to little more than translation into his exquisite and characteristic language. It is a fact that certain parts of Plutarch's *Otho* and *Galba* on the one hand, and of the *Histories* on the other, show striking resemblances, involving in one case² the use *in the same context* of the self-same, typically Silver, 'point,' and if we accept the view that the Greek will not have borrowed from the Roman, then we are indeed reduced to the necessity of believing that each writer has been making use of some now lost authority, and that an expression which looks thoroughly Tacitean may have come straight from this source. To me personally none of the arguments urged against Plutarch's having used Tacitus seems comparable in weight with the argument which the historian's own character supplies against a theory that would make him out first a mere stylist and then a stylist who cannot resist the temptation to reproduce an epigram which he finds in the book whence he is getting his facts.³ He certainly implies, and fairly frequently, that he has a number of authorities before him, though seldom naming them until he reaches

¹ *Agv.* 19, *Ann.* 4. 72.

² Tac. *Hist.* 1. 81 *cum timeret Otho, timebatur*, Plut. *Oth.* 3 φοβούμενος ὑπὸ τῶν ἀνδρῶν αὐτὸς ἦν φοβερός. The scene is the banquet of p. 182.

³ That both Tacitus and Plutarch should succumb to the temptation seems to me quite improbable, but I prefer to meet a pedantic theory on the broad ground of literary calibre.

Nero.¹ He occasionally refers to supplementary sources as Agrippina's memoirs, or accounts derived from men older than himself.² In speaking of the prosecutions for treason under Tiberius he claims to have unearthed a number of interesting cases that have been overlooked by his predecessors:³ that this attitude on his part is no pose seems proved by the Pliny letters mentioned above, which imply eagerness on the historian's part to open up new channels of information and recognition on his friend's of the improbability of anything having escaped his *pains-taking care*.⁴ He is not devoid of the critical faculty either. When he finds that Fabius Rusticus describes Seneca as bravely supporting Burrus at a crisis in which others maintain that he was never involved, he observes that this writer is addicted to the panegyric of his patron the philosopher.⁵ He likes to take current report or a statement on which his authorities are fairly unanimous, and test it in the balance of common sense, noting, for instance, that the popular explanation of Tiberius' withdrawal from Rome, as engineered by Sejanus, ignores the fact that it continued for the six years by which the emperor survived his minister, and that as Nero loved Poppaea and desired children by

¹ Cp. *Ann.* 1. 81, 3. 3, 4. 53, 6. 7, 13. 20. Definite names are cited, *Ann.* 1. 69 (C. Plinius), 13. 20 (Fabius Rusticus, Plinius, Cluvius), 14. 2 (Cluvius), 15. 53 (C. Plinius), 15. 61 (Fabius Rusticus), *Hist.* 3. 28 (C. Plinius).

² *Ann.* 4. 53 (see p. 161⁴), 3. 16 *audire me meminisse ex senioribus*, etc. He also refers to senate records (*Ann.* 15. 74 *commentarii senatus*), the official gazette (*Ann.* 3. 3 *diurna actorum scriptura*), published speeches of Tiberius (*Ann.* 1. 81) and accounts by Corbulo and Messalla (see p. 161).

³ *Ann.* 6. 7 *nobis pleraque digna cognitu obuenere, quamquam ab aliis incelebrata*.

⁴ See especially *Ep.* 7. 33. 3 *demonstro itaque, quamquam diligentiam tuam fugere non possit*.

⁵ *Ann.* 13. 20.

her, the legend that he killed her by poison, not an angry kick, deserves little credit.¹

If, then, we leave out of consideration the numerous cases in which Tacitus allows his passion for psychological description to lead him to ascribe motives to his characters when he cannot well have known what their motives were, cases, that is, where the deception is generally quite transparent, we may fairly say that he never consciously sacrifices historical truth, except in the matter of the speeches. Here, again, he is practising no deception, but merely following the convention of ancient history for which perhaps Thucydides is mainly responsible, and which, not content with requiring speeches where there was no evidence of anything having been said at all, or at all events no record of what had been said, forbade him, even when a full report was at his disposal, to make any other use of it than to select such of its ideas as he wished to preserve and throw them into a form that harmonized with the general style of his book. This is why Tacitus, when he declines to reproduce Seneca's dying utterances, on the ground of their having already been published, says that he would avoid (not 'the *repetition*,' but) 'the *recasting*' of his words.² And later on, when it is a question of plain speech with which an officer answers Nero's interrogation—

No soldier was more loyal to you while you deserved to be loved, but when you became murderer of your wife and mother, jockey, strolling-player, and incendiary, love changed to loathing—

he adds apologetically, 'I give the *actual words* : they

¹ *Ann.* 4. 57, 16. 6.

² *Ann.* 15. 63 *in uulguſ edita eius uerbis inuertere ſupersedeo.*

were never published like Seneca's, but the expressions of the soldier, forcible though crude, have equal right to fame.' ¹ The discovery at Lyons in 1528 of the record of part of the address with which Claudius recommended to the senate the proposal to make Roman citizens born in certain parts of Gaul eligible to the House, ² puts us in a position to compare one of these Tacitean 'versions' with its original. Mutilated as the tablet is, it preserves some characteristic specimens of the eccentric orator's eloquence. Claudius tries to enumerate *all* the changes the constitution has ever undergone, and in doing so does certainly mention those which illustrate Rome's readiness to admit foreigners to power. But even when dealing with these he is for ever digressing, generally into antiquarian by-ways. 'Among Rome's kings were aliens like the Tarquins and Servius Tullius' is a good argument, but what is the point of noticing the question as to whether the second Tarquin was son or grandson to the first, or whether or not Servius was once called Vivenna? When the speaker suddenly turns upon himself with the words, 'Tiberius Caesar Germanicus, 'tis time you made the senate clear as to the drift of your remarks,' we cannot help agreeing with him, but the fact remains that the apostrophe is highly undignified. It is also disappointing: there are more futilities to follow, and indeed the only really telling argument in the whole fragment comes at the end: 'if any one is thinking of the ten years these Gauls kept Caesar in the field, let him set on the other side the steadfast loyalty of a century.' The speech

¹ L.c. 67 *ipsa rettuli uerba, quia non, ut Senecae, uulgata erant, nec minus nosci decebat militaris uiri sensus incorruptos et ualidos.*

² C. I. L. 13. 1668 (=Dessau I. 212).

in the *Annals*¹ is a very much more effective production, with the same appeal to the precedents for changing the constitution, to the rule of kings of alien birth, to the long peace of Gaul, but no puerilities and no clumsiness. The points are kept distinct from each other and put tersely and forcibly: once at least historic accuracy is sacrificed to the claims of rhetoric; it is clear, in short, that we are listening to Tacitus, barrister and Silver historian, not Claudius the antiquarian.

Just as our author's conception of history occasionally differs from ours, so his views as to the dignity of history. The sordid story of Pontia's murder by the lover whom she proposes to desert² could hardly claim a place in the pages of a modern historian. Possibly the fact that this lover held at the time he committed the crime that great inheritance of Republican times the tribunate had some influence in deciding Tacitus to tell it. The fall of the wooden amphitheatre at Fidenæ,³ again, seems to us distinctly a topic for the daily journals, whose sphere we have seen Tacitus himself contrasting with that of his own activities. The place had been put up by a speculator with an eye to cheapness and complete disregard for details of joist and foundation: in the midst of a crowded performance the seats collapsed and the list of casualties reached, we are assured, the total of fifty thousand. It is of course quite possible that respect for the sanctity of human life has *not* uniformly advanced with the progress of the centuries, and that a disaster like this impressed the ancients far more than it does our hardened selves. Still, I fancy it was the sequel that most appealed to a mind

¹ II. 24.² *Ann.* 13. 44.³ *Ann.* 4. 62. 63.

that never failed to respond to the faintest echo of old republican virtues :

The houses of the great were thrown open, dressings and surgical aid put at every one's disposal ; in fact, it seemed at this moment as if the city, for all the gloom of its aspect, was repeating the practice of our ancestors, who after great battles would relieve the wounded with gifts of money and medical attention.¹

Sometimes, again, it looks as if Tacitus were anticipating the device with which Shakespeare relieves the strain of his tragic scenes. It can hardly, at least, be by accident that the narrative of the Piso conspiracy, full of storm and stress, is followed immediately by a most amusing episode.² One Caesellius Bassus assured Nero that he had discovered on his African estates an underground chamber full of gold ingots, the hidden treasure, he presumed, of ancient Dido. Steps were at once taken to test his good faith, but Caesellius, says the historian, was a muddle-headed fellow, and had only dreamed it all : no chamber could ever be found. Meanwhile, on the strength of the good things to come, Nero was spending freely and making grants, for the payment of which he had not at present the means, so that ' the prospect of riches was one of the reasons why the State grew poor.'³

Racine well calls Tacitus *le plus grand peintre de l'antiquité*.⁴ The pictures that fill the galleries of *Histories* and *Annals* are dark and sombre in colouring, but vivid and moving as perhaps no other canvasses which the ancients have left us, except Plato's *Death of Socrates* and Thucydides' *End of the Sicilian Expedition*, can claim to be. The series that has

¹ *Ann.* l.c. 63.

² *Ann.* 16. 1 sqq.

³ *Ann.* l.c. 3.

⁴ See the second preface to *Britannicus*.

Messalina for its chief figure is one of the best.¹ The first design draws her in the zenith of her power, taking part in the arraignment of Asiaticus, whose defence is so touching that his persecutor herself, bent though she is on the ruin of her rival's lover, owner of most charming gardens, must withdraw to dry her tears—after dropping the consul a word to warn him that her victim must on no account be acquitted. Next comes a conclave of freedmen, ministers and masters of their weak emperor, whispering together over the delicate situation in which Messalina's mock marriage with her paramour has placed them. Further on, as Claudius drives out from Ostia, in consequence of information received, the wiliest of these men Narcissus insists on a place at his master's side : the two courtiers who accompany the angry husband must not have a chance of pacifying him *en route*. Between the last two paintings comes a pair that must on no account be neglected. In the first, we see the vintage festival being celebrated in the palace gardens. Wine-presses are creaking, vats foaming, the ladies of the court, arrayed in the fawn skins of Bacchic revellers, dancing wild dances : to and fro amongst them move bride and bridegroom, she as chief worshipper with hair loose in the wind and brandishing the cone-tipped thyrsus-wand, he none other than the god himself, his head wreathed with ivy, on his feet stage buskins that raise mere mortal stature to that of the Olympians. Vettius, the court physician, has in his merry mood climbed a tree, and when they ask him what he can see reports a dreadful storm coming up from the direction of Ostia. More than a jest this jest, as the second picture shows,

¹ *Ann.* II. 2, 28, 33, 31, 32, 37.

where news of the emperor's coming has broken up the gay assembly, and a farm cart that never before carried aught more valuable than garden rubbish rumbles out on the Ostia road, with the empress and the three attendants that are now her only escort. In vain, for Narcissus frustrates all hope of interview with a weak husband; and presently, when he has brought his master safe to the camp of the guards and seen the bridegroom meet the death which is all he deigns to ask, despatches an officer to make an end of her. Once more we see her, as the tribune found her, groveling on the ground in those gardens she won from the condemnation of Asiaticus, with none beside her but her mother, who forgetting the differences of the prosperous past, has come to urge her to forestall the shame of execution. But a life of pleasure has long since killed any pride she may once have had, and she abandons herself to idle lamentation. Soon there will come knocking at the gate, and the minister of death will enter, nerving her to take the proffered dagger and point it timorously, now at her throat, now at her bosom: after all, it is the tribune's sword that will be needed. Little inferior to these are the canvasses that tell of the collapse of Piso's conspiracy,¹ beginning with a scene from low life, in which the courtesan Epicharis, weary of the lethargy of nobler confederates, rashly tries to win to the cause the ruffianly sea captain Volusius, who tells all he knows to Nero, and finishing in a torture chamber, where the captain of the guard, questioning a conspirator in the emperor's presence, suddenly turns pale and begins to babble inarticulately: he himself has been

¹ *Ann.* 15. 51 *sqq.*: the selected 'pictures' will be found in cc. 51 and 66.

in the plot, and his victim, weary of his brow-beating, has turned upon him with mysterious smile and words not at all mysterious : ' None knoweth more of it all than thou — repay then so forgiving a master ! ' ¹ Two magnificent series we have unfortunately lost, depicting the fall of Sejanus and the end of Nero. On the latter, last of the whole gallery, the artist must have lavished all his cunning : some idea of the treatment we may perhaps gather from the account in Suetonius ² and an earlier piece of Tacitus, *The Last Visit of Vitellius to his Palace* :

On the capture of the city, Vitellius has himself conveyed by a postern to his wife's house on the Aventine. . . . Then, naturally irresolute, and finding, fearful though the prospect everywhere, the situation of the moment always the least satisfactory (a common symptom of panic), he returns to the palace — a dreary desert, where even the most menial slaves had departed or shrank aside to avoid meeting him. The solitude, the silent halls fill him with dismay ; he rattles at locked doors, and shivers at the sight of empty apartments. ³

Of single pieces, of course, there are countless examples. The two most vivid, perhaps, of them come one from the *Annals*, the other from the *Histories*. The feast of reconciliation with Nero is over, and Agrippina is sailing homeward over a calm sea, under a night of stars ; her lady-in-waiting, seated on the couch at her feet, can talk of nothing but the completeness of the emperor's surrender. All the time the loaded canopy above them is intended to fall upon them, the very boat so contrived that it may suddenly collapse and fling them into the sea, and though the

¹ *Ann.* 15. 66 *neminem ait plura scire quam ipsum hortaturque ultro redderet tam bono principi uicem.*

² *Ner.* 48, 49.

³ *Hist.* 3. 84.

canopy fails to crush and boat to break up, mistress and maid will be precipitated into the water, Acerronia to die by the oars and boat-hooks of those who mistake her for the empress, Agrippina by her swim to shore to gain but the briefest respite.¹ The scene of the other picture is the palace, where Otho has a large party which is broken up by troops from Ostia who have been given cause to suspect a plot against their beloved emperor and have come to see that he is safe and sound. After some anxious moments, during which the guests are wondering if this is some trap their host has set for them, and their host fears that his own hour is come, he gives a hint that all shall withdraw: they stream out pell-mell, lictorless magistrates and servantless grandees, old men and women, to grope their way along the dark streets, a few going homeward, but most seeking securer refuge in the houses of friends and dependants; the troops come thrusting in, and only the sight of the emperor, mounted on a dining-couch and appealing with tears in his eyes to their esprit de corps, allays their excitement.² Mutinous troops are indeed a favourite subject of our author's, and the times he handles afford him ample scope to indulge his *penchant*.³ Particularly powerful is his description of the march of a Roman force which has slain its gallant commander and surrendered to the Gallic allies of Civilis and is ordered to proceed to Treves:—

In the midst of their preparations came the hour of departure, yet more bitter than it had been in anticipation. Inside the camp their humiliation had not been so obvious: the open country made their disgrace manifest. The

¹ *Ann.* 14. 5.

² *Hist.* 1. 81, 82.

³ See *Ann.* 1. 20, 32, 35; *Hist.* 2. 29.

standards, with the emperor medallions torn off them, looked disreputable, with the banners of Gaul brilliantly displayed on either side of them. Silently, like some long funeral cortege, the column moved onward, Claudius Sanctus at its head, a man whose face was rendered hideous by the loss of an eye and was yet less deformed than his soul. Their humiliation increased twofold when at Bonn the other legion broke up camp and joined them. The news of their capture had got abroad, and all who awhile since had shivered at the name of Rome came hurrying up from field and farm, streaming out from every side, to gaze with ineffable delight upon a scene so unprecedented.¹

Campaigns and tactics read somewhat vaguely in Tacitus, but there is no lack of vividness in his pictures of actual hand-to-hand engagements. The most graphic, I think, are the accounts of the night battle outside Cremona,² and the street fighting that followed the entry of the Flavian vanguard into Rome:—

The only troops that got into difficulties were those who, wheeling left by narrow, greasy lanes, towards the gardens of Sallust, tried to get up that way. The Vitellians, mounted on the garden walls and using stones and javelins, held them till late in the day, when they themselves were taken in flank by cavalry that had broken in at the Colline gate. There was also a fight in the Campus Martius. Fortune and the numerous victories of the past told in favour of the Flavians; the Vitellians were nerved by sheer despair, and though flung back, rallied again in the city. The city mob stood by watching the fray, encouraging each side in turn with cheers and clapping of hands, as though it were some gladiatorial show. When one side gave way, they would clamour to have those who had hidden themselves in shops or taken refuge in some house routed out and butchered, themselves securing the bulk of the plunder, for the soldiers were busy with the killing, and the spoils fell to the rabble. The whole city was one scene of hideous savagery: here men were fighting and

¹ *Hist.* 4. 62.

² *Hist.* 3. 22 sqq.

wounding, there thronging baths and taverns; pools of blood alternated with heaps of dead, with harlots and men sunk as low as harlots standing by. Here were all the vices of a licentious peace, all the crimes of the most merciless of sacks, for all the world as though 'twere bedlam and carnival at once in the same city. . . . Their indifference was hardly human: not for a moment would they forego their pleasures, but as if the whole affair were an additional item in the programme of the Saturnalia they revelled and took their joy—devoid of all sympathy with either faction, but delighted at the misery of their country.¹

There are portraits, too, in these galleries, for the most part, however, not very elaborate pieces of work. The estimate of Tiberius' personality at the end of Book Six is discriminating and subtle—

His character, too, has its distinct epochs: one that from the standpoint alike of conduct and reputation is admirable—when he was an ordinary citizen or in office under Augustus; the next a period of disguise and cunning, devoted to the simulation of virtues, and lasting as long as Germanicus and Drusus lived. Then, so long as his mother lived he varied between good and bad. So long as he found a friend in Seianus or was in fear of him, detestable as was his cruelty, he still concealed his lustfulness. At the end he plunged into crime and dishonour: shame and fear were flung to the winds, and he gave heed to nothing but his own inclinations.²

Another striking picture is that of Poppaea, a great advance on the Sempronia of Sallust, which has obviously inspired it, if only that it is no mere exhibition piece like that, but introduces us to an important figure, whose liaison with Nero Tacitus justly reckons 'the beginning of great evils for Rome.'³ Generally speaking, however, our author prefers the

¹ *Hist.* 3. 82, 83.

² *Ann.* 6. 51.

³ *Ann.* 13. 45. For Sempronia see *Sall. Cat.* 25.

thumb-nail sketch, flung off in the heat of the narrative, breathless parentheses whose coming the translator learns to dread :

Caecina, a dashing young soldier, of fine physique and unlimited ambition, a man that could talk well and hold his head erect.

Valens, after long penury, suddenly grown rich, concealed but ill the fact that his present estate was a novelty to him, unable to control desires that long poverty had inflamed, and proving, after the indigence of early years, in old age a spendthrift.

The purity of Livia's family life maintained the old traditions, though her social gifts outstepped the limits which the women of ancient times approved. A tyrannical mother, she was a complaisant wife, well assorted in fact with the diplomacy of her husband and the hypocrisy of her son.¹

The pregnant epigrams, acute observations, and scathing comments with which the works of Tacitus abound lose terribly in translation, but the effort must be made to give the reader some idea of so characteristic a feature. Perhaps the most famous of all is the British chief's epitome of Rome's provincial administration, 'where they make a wilderness, they phrase it *peace*.' ² The same chapter contains another well-worn tag, 'the unknown always seems sublime.' ³ Still in the same work, the *Agricola*,⁴ we have 'Fame does not always light at random: sometimes she chooses her man,' and ' 'Tis a human trait to hate one

¹ *Hist.* i. 53, 66; *Ann.* 5. i.

² *Agr.* 30. 7 *ubi solitudinem faciunt, pacem appellant.* The current version 'make a solitude and call it peace' is perhaps from Byron, *Bride of Abydos*, 2: 20.

³ 30. 4 *omne ignotum pro magnifico est.*

⁴ 9. 7 *haud semper errat fama: aliquando et elegit*, 42. 4 *proprium humani ingenii est odisse quem laeseris*,

you have wronged,' perhaps the most cynical of them all, and presumably the original of

Forgiveness to the injured doth belong,
And they ne'er pardon who have done the wrong.

Milton's 'last infirmity of noble mind' seems due to John of Salisbury, not Tacitus' saying, 'the passion for glory is the last to be thrown off even by the sage.'¹ This occurs in the *Histories*, which contains the paradoxical criticism of Galba, 'by common consent worthy of a throne—had he never filled it.'² The *Annals* supply the ancient equivalent of our modern proverb about beggars on horseback: 'the more intolerant because he had himself endured,' said of a transport officer who had served in the ranks.³ Tacitus often shows the intimate knowledge of the workings of the human heart by which this remark is inspired. Otho's senate fears that silence will be construed as disobedience, and frankness will rouse suspicion: as for flattery, well, Otho has been too recently a courtier not to recognize it.⁴ The sight of Caecina's wife on horseback robed in purple gives much offence: 'we all have a tendency to look for especial moderation from those we have seen in our own station of life.'⁵ An incompetent general, rather than seem dependent on his staff, does the direct opposite of what they advise.⁶ Vitellius, 'if the others did not remember he had been emperor,

¹ *Hist.* 4. 6 *etiam sapientibus cupido gloriae nouissime exuitur.*

² *Hist.* 1. 49 *omnium consensu capax imperii, nisi imperasset.*

³ *Ann.* 1. 20 *eo immitior quia tolerauerat.*

⁴ *Hist.* 1. 85.

⁵ *Hist.* 2. 20 *insita mortalibus natura recentem aliorum felicitatem acerbis oculis introspicere modumque fortunae a nullis magis exigere quam quos in aequo viderunt.*

⁶ *Ann.* 15. 10.

would easily forget the fact himself,'¹ Agrippina 'could win her son the sceptre, but not let him wield it.'² The cynical tendency of many of these observations is unmistakable: Tacitus is indeed a master of pregnant, biting satire. 'The foreshadowing by signs and tokens of the thrones that awaited Vespasian and his sons—'tis a story we credited *after his elevation*;' ³ 'So now there were three statues at Rome decked with the laurels of victory—and Tacfarinas was still raiding Africa;' ⁴ (Galba sends Vitellius to govern Upper Germany) 'he was son to the Vitellius that was censor and thrice consul—credentials enough, 'twas thought;' ⁵ (Otho and Vitellius fling the foulest charges at each other) 'both with justice;' ⁶ (Vitellius' generals wait for the other side to make a mistake) 'a substitute for strategy;' ⁷ (the troops are about to destroy Vienna when the inhabitants to some extent mollify them, and the general distributes largess), 'thereupon the age and standing of the place went for something.'⁸

Of the figures of speech Tacitus naturally makes effective use, especially oxymoron and paradox: 'a decree of the senate that was severe and—in-effective,' 'a tomb that was unpretentious—and

¹ *Hist.* 3. 63 *si principem eum fuisse ceteri non meminissent, ipse obliuisceretur.*

² *Ann.* 12. 64 *filio dare imperium, tolerare imperitantem nequibat.*

³ *Hist.* 1. 10 *occulta fati et ostentis ac responsis destinatum Vespasiano liberisque eius imperium post fortunam credidimus.*

⁴ *Ann.* 4. 23 *iamque tres laureatae in Vrbe statuæ—et adhuc raptabat Africam Tacfarinas.*

⁵ *Hist.* 1. 9 *A. Vitellius aderat, censoris Vitellii ac ter consulis filius: id satis uidebatur.*

⁶ *Hist.* 1. 74 *stupra et flagitia in uicem obiectauere—neuter falso.*

⁷ *Hist.* 2. 34 *quod loco sapientiae est, alienam stultitiam opperibantur.*

⁸ *Hist.* 1. 66 *addidit Valens trecenos singulis militibus sestertios: tum uetustas dignitasque coloniae ualuit.*

likely to last,' 'Burrus stood by (at Nero's musical performance) distressed and—applauding;' (at the obsequies of Brutus' sister Junia) 'twenty great houses were represented by masks of ancestors that appeared in the procession' . . . but 'Brutus and Cassius eclipsed all these, just because their images were not to be seen;' (Otho's generals profess to have mismanaged the campaign in the interests of Vitellius, who) 'accepts their tale of treachery, and acquits them of—loyalty.'¹ As for metaphor and personification, in such matters Tacitus is nearer to the writers of modern prose than to Cicero, or even Livy. 'A nation's hopes and fears are gathered round the palace,' in which Galba is adopting Piso; the characters of Vespasian and Mucian contain elements 'the blending whereof would have produced such a régime as never yet was seen;' Caecina 'seemed to have left cruelty and profligacy behind the Alps;' the senate in the presence of Vitellius says nothing against the Flavian leaders, throws all the blame on the troops, and 'treads delicately and reluctantly about the name of Vespasian;' Domitian 'filled the rôle of a prince so far as the practice of rape and adultery were concerned.'² The most striking of all these figurative expressions is the least translatable: rendered literally, it runs:

Whatever *the day Tiberius donned*, Caligula's demeanour corresponded, his conversation was little at variance.³

We can speak of 'having a bad day' and of 'wrap-

¹ The passages are (in the order of the text): *Ann.* 12. 52; *Hist.* 2. 49; *Ann.* 14. 15, 3. 76; *Hist.* 2. 60.

² The passages are *Hist.* 1. 17, 2. 5. and 20, 3. 37, 4. 2.

³ *Ann.* 6. 20 *qualem diem Tiberius induisset, pari habitu, haud multum distantibus uerbis.*

ping oneself in gloom,' but it seems impossible to reproduce the fusion of the two metaphors.

At this point it seems impossible to refrain from saying a word about the language of Tacitus. The perusal of a single page will reveal the fact that he likes words which, save in so far as they have already been revived by those inveterate archaizers Varro, Sallust, and the elder Pliny, seem to have fallen into disuse since the early period of Latin literature; that he avoids symmetry and parallelism of construction; and that he is exceedingly brief. I have mentioned Sallust in connexion with one of these tendencies — which confront the translator with problems similar to those that beset the translator of Virgil's *Aeneid* or Horace's *Odes*—but, as a matter of fact, the germs of all three are plainly visible in that writer, whom our author styles 'most brilliant of Roman historians,'¹ and often copies in thought or phrase. The archaizing of Tacitus is, of course, partly the fruit of his jealousy for the dignity of history. That the use of old-fashioned words 'that would not occur to any ordinary person' (as Quintilian puts it²) enhanced the solemnity and impressiveness of one's diction was a common-place of rhetorical instruction. It was, of course, an instrument that called for extreme nicety of touch. Quintilian himself quotes Virgil as an instance of a writer who used it successfully, but the pedants of Hadrian's time made a bludgeon of it, and, even under Nero, Seneca complains of people who speak the language of the Twelve Tables.³ Tacitus no doubt showed here as elsewhere the unerring

¹ *Ann.* 3. 30 *rerum Romanarum florentissimus auctor.*

² *Inst. Or.* 8. 3. 24 *quibus non quilibet fuerit usus.*

³ *Ep.* 114. 13 *duodecim tabulas loquuntur.*

judgment of a master, but it would be extremely difficult to prove that this actually was the case, as certainly any attempt to reproduce his vocabulary by the use of Wardour Street English would be disastrous. It is the same with the irregularities of construction: a sentence like 'Mucian, aware by now of the victory at Cremona, and lest there should be pressure from without at two different points of the empire, despatched the sixth legion against the Dacians' ¹ has never been English since our prose emerged from the facile laxities of its very earliest stages. When Tacitus writes in this way, I believe he is simply testifying to his admiration for Sallust—just as that writer himself is reproducing the unevennesses and confusions of construction which he found in Thucydides. The mannerism appears only very slightly in Livy, and is certainly not characteristic of Silver Latin Prose as a whole. To suppose that Tacitus chose a 'dislocated' style as peculiarly appropriate to the history of times which he undoubtedly did regard as out of joint, seems to me, in view of his generally Sallustian tendency, extremely fanciful. As for his brevity, it is secured by means essentially the same as those which his model has employed, but no careful reader can fail to perceive that beside a man who is writing after nearly a century of protest against the redundancy of Cicero and Livy, in an age which affects sentences that 'contain more thoughts than words,' ² Sallust shows something of the timidity of the innovator. He has nothing quite so bold as the strings of words which Tacitus sometimes throws at us, words that are each almost the equivalent

¹ *Hist.* 3. 46.

² See *Sen. Contr.* 3 pr. 7, *Ep.* 114. 1.

of a clause, as, for example, in the description of Pharasmanes and Orodes, who

recognize each other, and *with a shout, with weapons, with horses*, close in combat.¹

An extraordinary instance of compression occurs in the passage where Sejanus, whose royal master is in danger of being crushed by the falling roof of a cavern, is said to bend over him 'with knee and face and hands.'² The conception seems to be that he is using knees, head, and hands alike in the effort to hold up the rocks, and Tacitus has endeavoured, by employing the word *uultus*, which often denotes 'look of the face,' 'expression,' to give us a hint of the anxiety written upon the faithful henchman's features.

Pliny's attitude to Tacitus shows that the historian's contemporaries held his work in high esteem, but the second century was by no means so appreciative. Stylists resented the discreetness of his archaizing, Christians his criticisms of their religion,³ the ordinary reading public historic ideals which despised the piquancy that is the essence of the biographies of Suetonius. By the third century it was necessary for the emperor who bore his name to take special precautions to ensure the preservation of his works.⁴ A hundred years or so later, Gibbon's favourite Ammianus wrote a continuation of his *Histories*, often echoing his actual language. Sulpicius Severus, Orosius, and Sidonius⁵ seem to have read him, but the

¹ *Ann.* 5. 35 *conspicui, eoque gnari, clamore telis equis concurrunt.*

² *Ann.* 4. 59 *genu uultuque et manibus super Caesarem suspensus.*

³ *Cp. Tertull. Ad. Nat.* 1. 11, 2. 12.

⁴ *Vopisc. Tac.* 10. 3.

⁵ *Oros.* 1. 10. 5, *Sidon.* 4. 14. 1. For Sulpicius see Teuffel 441. 2.

vague reference of Cassiodorus¹ in the sixth century to 'one Cornelius' as authority for a statement about amber which stands in the *Germania* is the last trace of his name or influence until the end of the ninth century, when Rudolf of Fulda reproduces, without acknowledgment, some passages of the *Germania*, and certain *Annals*, probably written at Mainz, quote 'Cornelius Tacitus, chronicler of the Roman campaigns in Germany' as having mentioned the River Visurgis. Then darkness sets in again: John of Salisbury only mentions our author as a historian, Petrarch does not so much as name him. Boccaccio, however, had a MS. of Tacitus, which he used for his *De claris mulieribus*, and in 1427 the indefatigable collector of such treasures Niccolò Niccoli was in possession of the famous Second Medicean, written at Cassino and our sole authority for the latter half of the *Annals* and the *Histories*. Poggio himself was promised by a monk of Hersfeld some Tacitean works as yet unknown to the Renaissance: Panormita, indeed, writing in 1426, speaks of *Germania*, *Agricola*, and *Dialogus* as already discovered, but, as Poggio, three years later, is still inveighing against the deceptiveness of monkish promises, must presumably have mistaken the list of 'works obtainable' for one of actual 'deliveries.' Knowledge of the minor works seems to date from 1455, when Enoch of Ascoli returned from travels in Germany and the North with the MS. which was, apparently, the father of all existing MSS. of them.² In 1469 appeared the *editio princeps*, at Venice, lacking, of course, the first

¹ *Var.* 5. 2.

² Save in so far as there is reason to believe that one quaternion of the MS. discovered at Iesi is actually a fragment of Enoch's MS.

part of the *Annals*, which had not yet come to light, and also, less accountably, the *Agricola*. There is ground for supposing that the part of Enoch's MS. containing the biography had somehow quite early got separated from the rest : anyhow, it was not till 1476 that it appeared in print at the end of the Milan edition of the *Panegyrici*. Then in 1509 was discovered at Corbey the First Medicean, our sole source for the first part of the *Annals*, followed in 1515 by the appearance at Rome of the first 'complete' edition, entrusted by Leo the Tenth to the care of the younger Beroaldus.

The age of Machiavelli was not likely to miss the hint as to the political importance of Tacitus which is dropped in the preface of this work. The *Prince* itself occasionally betrays the historian's influence, and he is definitely quoted in the *Discorsi* and *Istorie Fiorentine*. Guicciardini observes that from him subjects may learn how to live under tyrants, tyrants how to lay the foundations of their power. Well on into the middle of the seventeenth century there poured from the presses of Italy, Spain, Holland, and Germany a veritable torrent of 'Discourses,' 'Observations,' and 'Reflexions,' packed with aphorisms from Tacitus, annotations, and excursions of a political character. Boccalini in the *Ragguagli di Parnasso* often quotes our author, and makes him play a prominent part in several of the gazettes. In France, Montaigne observes that a passage in *Comines* is identical with one in the *Annals*, and indulges in a characteristic digression on the merits of Tacitus.¹ Henri Quatre had a version prepared by his physician le Maistre : others were dedicated to Richelieu and Anne of Austria. Under

¹ *Essais* 3. 8.

Louis Quatorze the artistic merits of Tacitus begin to be recognized, Corneille writing an *Otho*, Racine a *Britannicus*. In England, where Bacon often quotes his aphorisms, Milton maintains, against Saumaise, that he is by no means the champion of absolutism : it is in the mouth of a fawning courtier that the words emphasizing the right of a king to the obedience of his subjects are placed. Gray, too, nearly a hundred years later, beginning an *Agrippina* and finding that he has written fifty lines where Tacitus had five words, admires the historian's 'detestation of tyranny and high spirit of liberty.' This view now begins to prevail across the Channel : Voltaire finds our author a republican, Mirabeau and Rousseau translate him; and when the revolution they foreshadow arrives, Madame Roland reads him a fourth time waiting death in prison, and Desmoulins in the *Vieux Cordelier* takes from him the text for a discourse on the theme that all despotisms, whether of monarch or mob, are the same. No wonder then that we find Napoleon anxious to correct his 'inaccuracies,' or complaining of the way he has blackened the memory of the emperors, whilst Chateaubriand and Chenier are persecuted for speaking of him as the avenger of nations, as one who

en trait de flamme accuse nos Sejans
et son nom prononcé fait pâlir les tyrans.¹

¹ For the history of the works of Tacitus and their influence I have derived much help from F. Ramorino, *Cornelio Tacito nella storia della cultura* (Milan, 1898).

CHAPTER VIII

PHILOSOPHY

OF the philosophic books of a Cornelius Celsus (presumably the encyclopaedist of p. 277), which are mentioned by Quintilian,¹ none has reached us; those of Cornutus, the beloved teacher of Persius and that Musonius who had for pupil Epictetus, seem to have been written in Greek.² But the work of Lucius Annaeus Seneca,³ one of the most considerable and characteristic products of our period, was done in Latin, and the bulk of it has survived.

Seneca was the son of the genial author of the *Controversiae*. Born somewhere about the beginning of the Christian era, and brought, apparently, a mere child to Rome,⁴ he had, by the time of Caligula, won sufficient reputation at the bar to rouse the imperial jealousy. His life hung by a thread until some one assured the tyrant that his rival was a consumptive who might safely be left to complete the short span of life allowed him by the doctors.⁵ His physique was indeed not powerful: from youth upwards he suffered not merely from catarrhs, but from a complaint which seems, in the description he gives of it, to combine the

¹ *Inst. Or.* 10. 1. 124 (under writers on philosophy) *scripsit non parum multa Cornelius Celsus, Sextios secutus, non sine cultu ac nitore.*

² So certainly the only one we possess, in which he allegorizes a number of myths.

³ He himself mentions *praenomen* and *nomen* in *Ben.* 4. 8. 3.

⁴ *Consol. ad Helu.* 19. 2. ⁵ *Dio* 59. 19. 7.

symptoms of asthma and *angina pectoris*.¹ Under Claudius he was endangered again, by the hostility of Messalina, through whose machinations he was banished to Corsica as the paramour of the emperor's niece Julia.² The fall of this enemy was followed by the marriage of Claudius with Agrippina, who entertained the highest opinion of Seneca's merits, and securing his recall, entrusted him with the education of her son Nero.³ With this prince's accession, Seneca's life becomes part of Roman history, the administration of the empire lying practically in the hands of himself and the guard captain Burrus. Now it was, no doubt, that he laid the foundations of his colossal fortune: on the other hand, the influence which he and his colleague exercised upon the emperor in this earlier period seems to have been in the main distinctly for good. But by A.D. 62, when Burrus was dead and the treason prosecutions began to be revived,⁴ he realized that he had undertaken the impossible and craved permission to retire.⁵ The request was skilfully refused, but from now onward Seneca dropped the pomp and ceremony of a great minister, avoided company, and went little abroad.⁶ The régime of Tigellinus ensued, and the emperor plunged into that life of savagery and mountebank folly which in A.D. 65 provoked the unsuccessful conspiracy of Piso. It was said that some of the conspirators had intended in case of success to throw the young noble aside and offer the purple to Seneca,⁷ but there seems to have been no evidence of his com-

¹ See for catarrhs *Ep.* 78. 1, for asthmatic trouble *Ep.* 57 *passim*, for early delicacy *Consol. ad Helu.* 19. 2: cp. also *Ep.* 46. 1.

² Dio 60. 8.

³ Tac. *Ann.* 12. 8.

⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 14. 51 and 48.

⁵ Tac. l.c. 53-56.

⁶ Tac. l.c. 56 sub fin.

⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 15. 65.

plicity in the plot. None the less promptly came the order of self-destruction, which he obeyed with courage and dignity.¹

All Senecan prose that we possess, with the possible exception of the treatise addressed to Marcia and the *On Leisure*, seems to have been written after the death of Caligula, and all of it, with the exception again of the work examined on pp. 217 *sqq.*, is concerned with the philosophy to which educated men had now begun to look for that guidance in the conduct of life with which Roman religion so conspicuously failed to provide them. Seneca himself mentions philosophers who held in certain noble houses a position not very different from that of the family priest or chaplain of more recent times, mitigating the grief of a bereaved empress or attending their master in his last moments on the scaffold.² A directorship in the troubled house of Claudius was no sinecure, but Seneca, looking about for a yet wider field for his activities, conceived the idea of adapting to the service of fashionable society those popular addresses on philosophy, commonly known by the name *diatribe*, in which the reply to the objections of imaginary interlocutors played a great part, and the interest of even the most flippant was secured by piquant anecdotes and telling illustrations. It was mainly a matter of making suitable changes in the dress by means of which the Cynics in particular had rendered the plain and homely maxims of Stoicism attractive to the man in the street. The road to the gay and frivolous hearts of Nero's courtiers must be sought by way of the head, and the character of Seneca's literary genius promised him every success in the finding of it.

¹ Tac. *Ann.* 15. 60-64.

² *Consol. ad Marc.* 4. 2, *Tranq.* 14. 9.

He had, indeed, already made some experiments in the direction contemplated. The **Consolationes* addressed to his mother, Helvia, who must learn that a philosopher finds no evil in exile, and to the powerful freedman Polybius, who has lost a brother,¹ belong to this period, and are philosophic essays, not mere letters of consolation. But all other works for which an approximate date can be found were composed after the return from banishment. The first of these is the **De Brevitate Vitae* (*On Life's Brevity*), written before the extension of the city boundaries that took place in A.D. 49-50.² The *De Clementia* (*On Clemency*), with its reference to Nero turned eighteen,³ must belong to A.D. 56. The *De Beneficiis* (*On Benefits*) has a passage too full of contempt for Claudius to have appeared before his death in A.D. 54: on the other hand, it is mentioned in one of the letters.⁴ The *Naturales Quaestiones* (*Physical Problems*) mentions the Campanian earthquake of A.D. 63.⁵ In the **De Providentia* (*On Providence*, or, as its second and more definite title runs, *How it is that inconveniences befall good men in spite of the existence of Providence*) we find the author contemplating that collective work on Morals upon which in the *Letters* we see him actually engaged.⁶ And these last, *Epistulae Morales*, take us

¹ The words *hic* (*Claudius*) *Germaniam pacet, Britanniam aperiat, et patrios triumphos ducat et novos: quorum me quoque spectatorem futurum . . . promittit clementia* (13. 2) show that the work was written in exile, about A.D. 44.

² See 13. 8 *Sullam ultimum Romanorum protulisse pomerium*.

³ 1. 9. 1.

⁴ *Ben.* 1. 15. 5, *Ep.* 81. 3.

⁵ 6. 1. 10.

⁶ *Prov.* 1. 1 *hoc commodius in contextu operis redderetur*, compared with *Ep.* 106. 1 *id de quo quaerebas ueniebat in contextum operis mei.* (2) *scis enim me moralem philosophiam uelle complecti et omnes ad eam pertinentes quaestiones explicare*, 108. 1 *nec uis exspectare libros quos cum maxime ordino, continentes totam moralem philosophiae partem.*

from the retirement in A.D. 62 to A.D. 64/65.¹ The **De Ira* (On Anger), the **De Constantia Sapientis* (On the Inviolability of the Sage), the **De Vita Beata* (On the Happy Life), and the **De Tranquillitate Animi* (On Peace of Mind) are certainly post-Caligulan :² on the other hand, the first cannot have been written after A.D. 52,³ the second and fourth must date before the death of their addressee Serenus, to which reference is made in one of the letters,⁴ and the third must have been dedicated after the *De Ira*.⁵ The **Consolatio* addressed to Marcia, daughter of Cremutius, three years after the death of her son, and the **De Otio* (On Leisure) contain nothing that bears upon the question of their date.

The ten works to which I have prefixed an asterisk are united in one of our best MSS. under the misleading title of *Dialogues*. In only one of them (*De Tranquillitate*) does any definite interlocutor appear, and his part is confined to the confession of certain weaknesses and the first of the seventeen chapters of the essay. In the others, brief and colourless sentences in which, exactly as in *Diatribes*, and all the other works of Seneca, an imaginary adversary raises objections are the only interruptions which the fluent monologue admits. It seems incredible that Seneca himself can have given

¹ *Ep.* 8. 1, 2 (*in hoc me recondidi et foras clusi . . . nullus mihi per otium dies exit . . . secessi non tantum ab hominibus sed a rebus*) suggests the retirement, *Ep.* 91 has for text the fire at Lyons which Tac. *Ann.* 16. 13 shows to have taken place about A.D. 65. There are several allusions to the author's advanced age: see especially 26. 1 *modo dicebam tibi in conspectu esse me senectutis; iam uereor ne senectutem post me reliquerim*, 83. 4 *iam aetas mea non descendit, sed cadit*.

² All speak ill of Caligula save the *De Vita Beata*, which itself falls later than the *De Ira* (see note 5).

³ For its addressee Novatus had by that year become Gallio of Acts 18. 12.

⁴ 63. 14.

⁵ Novatus has become Gallio: see *Vit. Beat.* 1. 1.

such work the same name as that with which the dramatic compositions of a Plato are for ever connected.

Seneca's interests lie almost exclusively in the direction of moral philosophy. Even in the *Physical Problems* he is always looking for an opportunity to abandon scientific research and embark on the infinitely more congenial topic of the wickedness of the age.¹ The physicist wishes to know how snow is formed, but in Book Four Seneca has hardly formulated the question when his sensitive ear catches a protest from his class: 'Why worry about a thing that may make one a better scholar but scarcely a better man? Teach me, not how snow is produced, but how I can dispense with it to cool my wine!' ² And the complaisant professor flies off into a jeremiad against luxury which extends to the end of the book. Nor is the origin of snow again discussed. Book Five is concerned with the winds, and itself imperceptibly merges ³ into a dissertation on the avarice that prompts men to go to sea and put themselves at the mercy of these uncontrollable forces. In all this Seneca is but carrying out the principle he elsewhere enunciates quite plainly: 'read what you will, but apply it at once to morals!' ⁴ Naturally he has little sympathy for the old Stoic *penchant* for wire-drawn discussions and ingenious syllogisms. '*Mouse is a syllable*,' he quotes on one occasion, ⁵ '*a mouse eats cheese: ergo, a syllable eats cheese*. And I suppose unless I show the flaw in the reasoning, I shall get my cheese eaten up by one of my books!' That such things have a value as a means

¹ *Conuicium saeculi* Sen. *Contr.* 2 pr. 2, where we see that the declaimers also indulged in it.

² 13. 1.

³ The transition is at 18. 4.

⁴ *Ep.* 89. 18. *dummodo quidquid legeris ad mores statim referas.*

⁵ *Ep.* 48. 6.

of mental recreation he does not however deny,¹ and himself occasionally condescends to discuss whether good is a body, the virtues animals, or examines such syllogisms as that of Zeno's, which ran *A man will not trust secrets to a drunkard, he will trust them to a good man, no good man then will be a drunkard.*² But in most of the cases we feel that he is only anxious to show what he could do in this direction if he cared to try, and are soon put off with, 'But all this has no moral effect, cures no vice, breeds no virtue,'³ or some such phrase. The old philosophers, he thinks, would have accomplished more had they not wasted time on such matters, which 'make philosophy difficult rather than grand.'⁴ They in their turn might have reminded him that consideration of style never distracted *their* attention, whilst they *do* his, in spite of the tribute he pays a saying of Euripides—

The language that Truth speaks is simple still⁵

and in spite of a letter that is hardly more than an elaboration of the theme *I would have my words profit, not please.*⁶ He would doubtless have replied with a passage like the following :

In writing philosophy I certainly hold it best to concentrate on thoughts, and speak on their account only : one can leave them to find the words, which will follow easily enough in their wake. . . . But then again, when my mind is exalted by the grandeur of its meditations, it begins to be nice about words, and is anxious that its tone shall be as lofty as its conceptions : I forget my principles, my

¹ *Ep.* 58. 25.

² *Ep.* 106. 3, 113. 1, 83. 9.

³ See e.g. *Ep.* 45. 9, 109. 17.

⁴ *Ep.* 45. 4, 71. 6 *id agunt ut philosophia potius difficilis quam magna uideatur.*

⁵ *Ep.* 49. 12 *ut ait ille tragicus 'ueritatis simplex oratio est.'* (Eur. *Phoen.* 469 ἀπλοῦς ὁ μῦθος τῆς ἀληθείας ἔφν.)

⁶ *Ep.* 75.

simplicity, and begin to soar aloft and speak with accents not mine own.¹

The very simplicity of Seneca's actual vocabulary, which is that of ordinary, educated conversation, generally avoided by the strictly literary writers of Rome,² serves but as a setting to bring out the brilliance of the form in which the thoughts are expressed. The epigrams may be too frequent: they certainly do, as Macaulay complained, make it difficult to read much at a sitting, but they are well conceived and well put, and their abundance is that of a rich soil, not a hot-house. 'If Seneca sparkles,' says Diderot, 'it is as the diamond sparkles, or the star—because it is his nature to do so.' A perusal of the pages of such admirers as Montaigne or Burton is perhaps the easiest way of gleaning Senecan wit, but the reader may like to see a few examples translated here:

A man who has taken your time recognizes no debt: yet it is the one he can never repay (*Ep.* 1. 3).

You cannot read all the books you have: have then only as many as you can read (*Ep.* 2. 3).

Rules make the learner's path long, examples make it short and successful (*Ep.* 6. 5).

Man at his birth is content with a little milk and a piece of flannel: so we begin, that presently find kingdoms not enough for us (*Ep.* 20. 13).

A lesson that is never learnt can never be too often taught (*Ep.* 27. 9).

They that mistake life's accessories for life itself are like them that go too fast in a maze: their very haste confuses them (*Ep.* 44. 7).

'Tis not the belly's hunger that costs so much, but its pride (*Ep.* 60. 3).

¹ *Tranq.* 1. 13, 14.

² See my edition of the *Letters*, Intr., p. xlii. *sqq.*

Men love their country, not because it is great, but because it is their own (*Ep.* 66. 26).

No one finds his proficiency in a study just where he dropped it (*Ep.* 71. 35).

Life is a play: 'tis not its length, but its performance that counts (*Ep.* 77. 20).

Retirement without the love of letters is living burial (*Ep.* 82. 3).

Wealth falls on some men as a copper down a drain (*Ep.* 87. 16).

Life should be like the precious metals, weigh much in little bulk (*Ep.* 93. 4).

The good man is Nature's creditor, giving her back better life than he had of her (*Ep.* 93. 8).

Nature flings us into, she flings us out of, the world: more than you brought with you you may not take away (*Ep.* 102. 24).

Abstinence is easier than temperance (*Ep.* 108. 16).

Savageness is always due to a sense of weakness (*Vit. Beat.* 3. 4).

To forgive all is as inhuman as to forgive none (*Clem.* 1. 2. 2).

A multitude of executions discredits a king, as a multitude of funerals a doctor (*Clem.* 1. 24. 1).

Virtue rejects a mean admirer: you must come to her with open purse (*Ben.* 4. 24. 2).

Seneca's love for antithesis is sufficiently exemplified in these extracts: he often points it with alliteration, which can generally be more or less reproduced—'*Our predecessors guides, not governors; I class slaves by character, not charge*'¹—but seldom so happily as by Elyot, when in the *Governour* he renders the play on *anuli* and *animi* by *seals* and *souls*.² Another favourite trick is the metaphorical use of some everyday, perhaps

¹ *Ep.* 33. 11 *non domini nostri sed duces sunt*, 47. 15 *non ministeriis illos aestimabo, sed moribus*.

² *Ben.* 3. 15. 3, *Governour* 3. 7.

business, phrase: *Hunger won't listen to rules, it duns us, This is but gold-leaf happiness, Death's the discharge of our debt of sorrow, Our ancestors compounded with the persistence of woman's tears* (by allowing a year's mourning for a husband), *No choice maxims—we Stoics don't practise that kind of window dressing.*¹ Paradox, the stock weapon of social reformers, Seneca wields at least as well as any of them: *To know how to despise pleasure is itself a pleasure; A coward like this deserves to—have his life prolonged; To be philosophy's slave is to be free; I've been mixing with humanity to-day, and feel the less humane in consequence; Death? 'Tis one of life's duties.*² The use of illustrations, especially from the sphere of medicine, athletics, naval and military life, and the animal world, is very happy: *Epileptics know by signs when attacks are imminent and take precautions accordingly: we must do the same in regard to anger;*³ *Pleasure is virtue's accompaniment, not its object, as the flowers in a cornfield please the eye, but it was not for them that it was ploughed;*⁴ *Athletes endure blows for honour's sake: can we not do likewise, who seek no mere chaplet, but virtue and strength of mind and peace eternal?*⁵ *You are not necessarily a deserter if you devote yourself to research: he who does garrison duty is as much a soldier as he that is in the fighting line;*⁶ *Bassus' body is worn out, but his mind is lively: a skilful captain sails on even when his sails are torn and if his*

¹ Ep. 21. 11 *uenter praecepta non audit: poscit, appellat*, 115. 9 *omnium istorum . . . bratteata felicitas est*, Consol. ad Marc. 19. 5 *mors dolorum omnium exsolutio est*, Consol. ad Helu. 16. 1 *ut cum pertinacia muliebris maeroris publica constitutione deciderent*, Ep. 33. 3 *non habemus itaque ista oculiferia nec emptorem decipimus nihil inuenturum cum intrauerit praeter illa quae in fronte suspensa sunt.*

² Vit. Beat 4. 2, Ep. 101. 12, 8. 7, 7. 3, 77. 19.

³ Ira 3. 10. 3.

⁴ Vita Beat. 9. 2.

⁵ Ep. 78. 16.

⁶ Tranq. 3. 5.

*masts go, he will yet try to keep the hulk on her course ;*¹ *I am like a book, with pages that have stuck together for want of use : my mind needs unpacking and the truths stored within must be turned over from time to time, to be ready when occasion demands ;*² *Human society is like an arch, kept from falling by the mutual pressure of its parts ;*³ *The voice of flattery affects us after it has ceased, just as after a concert men find some agreeable air ringing in their ears to the exclusion of all serious business.*⁴ The poets too, especially Virgil and Ovid, often provide a text or testimony : the lines in which Tityrus praises the benefactor who has enabled him to keep his farm are quoted to emphasize the ingratitude shown by men to the greater bounty of heaven, the description of a thoroughbred in the *Georgics* is compared with the Stoic ideal of the good man.⁵

The common tendency to dismiss Seneca's work as mere rhetoric surely ignores the many passages in which, inspired by the ardour of some favourite topic, our author forgets the limited capacities of the audience which he is addressing, and allows himself to display real feeling and an eloquence that seems to me to have in it something of the dithyrambic flights of Plato himself—

Here was one that had attained virtue, that had perfected himself, and never did he rail at Fortune or meet trouble with a downcast face, but reckoning himself a citizen of the universe and a soldier faced hardship as part of the orders of the day. Whatever came along, he shrank not from it as evil that had drifted his way by chance, but rather (accepted it) as especially allotted to himself. 'Whate'er it be,' he cried, 'it is my task : if it is hard and irksome, let us try

¹ *Ep.* 30. 3.

³ *Ep.* 95. 53.

⁵ *Ben.* 4. 6. 4 *sqq.*, *Ep.* 95. 68, 69.

² *Ep.* 72. 1.

⁴ *Ep.* 123. 9.

our mettle upon just its difficulties. One that never complained of misfortune, never bewailed his lot, was of necessity deemed a great man : he taught many others to appreciate his character and shone forth like a lamp in the darkness, drawing upon him the attention of all men. For a man of peace and mildness was he, one that neither man's ways nor God's dispensations could disturb.¹

A day will come that will pluck you away from this lodging you share with that foul and unsavoury companion, the belly. From him hold aloof, so far as may be, even now : be no friend to pleasure save such as is bound up with things decent and necessary ; begin even in this life to rehearse a nobler, higher estate. Some day the mysteries of nature will be revealed to you, yon mists will be dispelled and bright radiance beat on you from every side. Picture then the splendour, when all the stars commingle their fires and not a shadow mars the peaceful sky, and every quarter of the firmament is one unvarying brilliance. Night and day are changes known but to the lowest regions of the atmosphere. You will own then to having lived in darkness when you behold the light, pure and whole as you yourself will then be pure and whole, that light divine which you see now but dimly through the narrow corridors of the eyes, and yet marvel at it all that distance away—how will you find it when you view it in its native abode ? ²

Nature was not so unkind as to make it easy for other creatures to live and leave man alone dependent on so many crafts. . . . We were born to a world where all lay ready to hand : ourselves have made it difficult by our contempt for the things that are easy. Shelter, clothing, warmth, food, and all the things that now make such a mighty coil, were not once far to seek, cost nothing or but slight trouble. . . . Nature can provide all she demands, but luxury, deserting her, every day spurs herself on, waxes stronger every generation, racks her brains to make our errors worse. . . . There was a time when the body was rationed like a slave ; now, it is catered for like a master. . . . It is lost for ever, the limit Nature gave us, that bounded desire by the relief

¹ *Ep.* 120. 12, 13.

² *Ep.* 102. 27, 28.

required : we have reached a time when to want only what is enough argues lack of breeding and spirit.¹

Let us stop their lighting up of candles on the Sabbath : the gods do not need illumination, and soot is no pleasure even to man. Let us bid them cease morning attendance and session at the temple doors : such attentions appeal only to human pride. He that knows what God is is worshipping Him. Let us bid them cease bringing Jupiter bath-towels and brushes, holding mirrors up to Juno. God needs none to minister to Him : how can He, that Himself ministers to mankind, ever at the disposal of all ? . . . Not far shall a man go, if he have not the right conception of God, as possessor of all and giver of all, one that does favours without thought of repayment. . . . The first article of divine worship is belief in the gods ; the second, recognition of their grandeur, their goodness—without which there can be no grandeur. . . . Worship enough has he given them, that has imitated them.²

And some think to have conquered fear and desire even without the help of philosophy. But when some disaster catches them off their guard, the truth is wrung from them at last. Fine words are forgotten when the torturer says 'Your hand!', when death comes close. It was easy enough to challenge misfortune when it was far away, but see, here is pain, which you said could be borne ; here is death, against whom you have delivered so many a fiery declamation : whips are cracking, swords flashing—

Now need'st thou spirit, Aeneas, and stout heart.

And stout it will become by constant preparation—if you practise not mere rhetoric, but the mind.³

How much Seneca owes to his predecessors, especially Panaetius and Posidonius, who did so much to clear away the paradox and severity that checked the growth of Stoicism long after it struck root in Roman soil, we cannot define : time has played havoc with the books that must have filled his shelves. But on whatever he borrowed it is clear that he has imprinted the

¹ *Ep.* 90. 18, 19.

² *Ep.* 95. 47-50.

³ *Ep.* 82. 7, 8.

stamp of his own great personality and carried out in practice that assimilation of various materials into something totally different from any one ingredient which he preaches in one of the most interesting of his letters.¹ His interpretation of Stoicism is independent and hopeful, broad and humane. Bitterly as he deplores the decline of learning, he has supreme confidence in a brighter future :

A day will come when long-continued research will bring to light all that now is hidden . . . when our descendants will marvel at our ignorance of things so obvious. . . . Let us be content with what we can discover, and allow posterity in its turn to contribute towards the knowledge of truth.²

Of course one who speaks thus is an apostle of research, no blindfold follower of authorities :

This doctrine of mine I can show to be Stoic. Not that I have bound myself to do nothing that runs counter to the rules of Zeno or Chrysippus, but it so happens that here I can follow them into the lobby. To vote always with a particular individual is to be a partisan, not a senator.³

Let us play the part of good managers, and increase the patrimony that we have inherited. . . . Much remains to be done, and always will remain : he that comes a thousand ages hence will not find himself denied the opportunity to add to the store.⁴

It is ignominious to be an old man, or within hail of old age, and have only notebook wisdom. 'That's Zeno's view.' And what's yours? 'That's what Cleanthes said.' And what say you? How long are your movements to be at another man's disposal? . . . There's no mettle, to my mind, in these people who never speak for themselves, but are mere spokesmen taking cover behind somebody else, never venturing at length to carry out the rules they have been conning so long.⁵

¹ 84. 5.

² *De Otio* 3. 1.

⁴ *Ep.* 64. 7.

² *Nat. Quaest.* 7. 25. 4 and 7.

⁵ *Ep.* 33. 7, 8.

Seneca had all the Roman aptitude for satire : there is nothing in Juvenal to beat his pictures of the art collector ' taking meticulous care over the arrangement of his bronzes and spending best part of the day in poring over bits of rusty metal ; ' ¹ the Adonis ' passing hours with the barber, holding solemn counsel over each separate hair, furious if too much is cropped off his mane, willing rather to have the constitution upset than his precious curls ; ' ² the illiterate book-buyer who ' must have his shelves of citrus wood and ivory, and buys up sets of authors whose writings are either unknown or condemned—only to sit yawning in the midst of them and get most of his satisfaction out of bindings and title pages. ' ³ But although he admits once ⁴ that when one reflects on man's iniquity one is tempted to become a misanthrope, he hastens to add that we must resist such temptations and look upon sin as ridiculous rather than hateful. The remedy is, as he says elsewhere, to keep our own case in mind and consider if we have not ourselves committed the very offence that has angered us. ⁵ For indeed :

There is not one that can wholly acquit himself : if any says he is without sin he is keeping in view an eyewitness, not his own conscience. . . . A man then must be reformed for his own good as well as that of others, not indeed without censure, but still without anger. Does a doctor fly into a passion with his patient ? ⁶

And Seneca himself does not claim to be even a

¹ *Breu. Vit.* 12. 2.

² *Ib.* 3 (*quis est istorum qui non malit rempublicam turbari quam comam suam ?*).

³ *Tranq.* 9. 6 *armaria e citro atque ebore captanti, corpora conquirenti aut ignotorum auctorum aut improbatorum, et inter tot milia librorum oscitanti—cui uoluminum suorum frontes maxime placent titulique.*

⁴ *Tranq.* 15. 1 *occupat animum odium humani generis.*

⁵ *Ira.* 2. 28. 8.

⁶ *Ira.* 1. 14. 3, 15. 1.

doctor. 'I'm not so brazenfaced,' he writes to Lucilius, 'as to set up for a physician when I'm an invalid: no, 'tis as if I were in the same ward with you and were talking over our common infirmity and its cure.'¹ How enlightened he was on the question of gladiatorial shows and treatment of slaves² is well known: he is equally liberal in respect to the education of women, scouting the suggestion that Nature has not dealt generously with her,³ and lamenting that his father's prejudices made it impossible for his mother to more than dabble in the liberal studies.⁴ No ancient writer not actually a follower of Epicurus can have done more justice to that philosopher's character and creed:

I hold, though many of my fellow Stoics will disagree with me, that the teaching of Epicurus is chaste and moral; nay, if you look close at it, austere. Pleasure with him is reduced to a minimum, a mere shadow, and he prescribes the same conditions for it as we for virtue, requiring it to obey nature. . . . But every one who applies the word *happiness* to slothful ease and the alternation of lust and gluttony casts about for a good name to which to appeal in defence of an evil practice, is attracted to this school by a tempting word, and then pursues not the pleasure which he is taught but that which he knew before.⁵

This freedom from prejudice, this readiness to take help where it offers and look facts in the face, is natural enough in one who was a statesman as well as a philosopher, a man of the world whom experience and responsibility had taught to think lightly of much that even the later Stoics would have reckoned among

¹ *Ep.* 27. *1 non sum tam improbus ut curationes aeger obeam, sed tamquam in eodem ualeutinario iaceam de communi tecum malo colloquor et remedia communico.*

² See *Epp.* 7 and 47.

³ *Consol. ad Marc.* 16. 1.

⁴ See p. 256⁷.

⁵ *Vit. Beat.* 13. 1, 2.

essentials. That at times his broadmindedness verges upon laxity, that the Pagan moralist ignores standards by which the Christian must always be bound, one cannot but concede. But this is not the charge most commonly urged against Seneca, whose critics lay stress mainly on inconsistencies between preaching and practice : he praised poverty, but enjoyed a fortune ; he declaimed against luxury, but had five hundred citrus wood tables in his house ; ‘ Seneca, *in his books* a philosopher,’ as Milton’s epigram puts it.¹ And yet it is not easy to think of any particular incident in his life that he could not have justified, at any rate palliated, out of his own writings. In the *De Vita Beata*, indeed, he frankly refers to such accusations, and defends himself against them with ability. First, from a general standpoint, and one which the consistent humility of his language, to which I have already alluded, fully entitles him to take up. ‘ I am no sage,’ he says, ‘ and, as a sop to your malevolence, may add, never shall be. All you have a right to expect of me is that I should be better than the bad, and every day discard somewhat of my folly. These charges you make were made against Plato, Epicurus, and Zeno : they never professed to say how they lived, but only how they ought to live.’² Then, coming to grips with a particular count of the indictment, he points out that wealth enables the philosopher to put into practice the qualities he has developed, to work out his theories. To refuse riches the entrée to one’s house is a confession of one’s ignorance of the art of using them.³ An argument surely not without weight, and one which the wealthy socialists of modern times cannot despise to use.

¹ *Hist. of England*, Bk. 2.

² 17. 3-18. 1.

³ 22. 1 ; 23. 3, 4.

But elsewhere Seneca goes a step further. 'The wise man,' he says, 'who desires to cross a particular threshold will bribe the door-keeper, exactly as he will pacify a savage dog with a dainty: he knows that there are bridges that cannot be crossed without payment of toll.'¹ Here we have the germ of the principle that bids us *to do a great good do a little ill*, the only justification for that pandering to the softer vices of his royal pupil by which he sought to purchase the power to repress others more savage and more obviously dangerous to his country.

In some of his letters Seneca implies that he is engaged upon a treatise that is to give a systematic statement of his views on the whole field of moral philosophy,² but nothing of the kind has come down to us. How unsystematic the extant works are (and I think this is what Coleridge had in mind when he complained that our author never really thought anything out³) may be gathered from the analysis of a typical one like the *On Anger*, reckoned, oddly enough, by Diderot as a model of arrangement. About the middle of Book Two⁴ the subject matter is divided into the two heads *How to avoid becoming angry*, and *How, having become angry, to avoid doing evil*. As the first head occupies the rest of the book, one naturally expects Book Three to start with the consideration of the second. But no: it begins as if Book Two had never been written, 'And now for the attempt to root out, or at least check, anger,' and after a few generalities introduces us to a new classification under three heads, two of which are those of Book Two, whilst the third is labelled, *How to check other people's anger*.⁵ The explanation

¹ *Const. Sap.* 14. 2.

³ *Table-talk*, June 26, 1830.

² See p. 198⁶.

⁴ 18. 1.

⁵ 5. 2.

of all this slovenliness lies in a fact to which the reader's attention has already been drawn. No matter whether Seneca's work purports to be Dialogue or Dissertation, Scientific Enquiry or Letter (and in the *Letters* he even takes some trouble to give us the impression that he is really engaged in a genuine correspondence), still the model is invariably the diatribe, with the easy, conversational conditions of which anything like systematic treatment is quite incompatible. In the same way much of the responsibility for the inconsistencies which abound in these works is to be explained by the peculiar taste of the circles for which they were written and which had learned in the declamation halls to give their applause to a spirited attack or piquant phrase without troubling their heads very much as to its harmony with the general lines on which the case was being pleaded.

Of Seneca's biography of his father and a treatise *On the Maintenance of Friendship* only the most meagre fragments are preserved.¹ A considerable quantity of his prose has been completely lost: Gellius quotes a twenty-second book of the letters to Lucilius,² of which we only have twenty: other writers mention ten books of letters to his brother Novatus, essays on such themes as Duty, Superstition, and Marriage, geographical accounts of India and Egypt, and published speeches.³ Its popularity was such that Quintilian

¹ In a fifth or sixth century palimpsest. For the biography see p. 151¹.

² 12. 2. 3.

³ Letters to Novatus, Priscian. *De Fig. Num.* (G.L. 3, p. 410); *De Officiis* (many fragments of which are probably buried in the *Formula Vitae Honestae* of Martin of Bracara: see Bickel, *Rhein. Mus.* 60. 505 sqq.), Diomedes (G.L. 1, p. 366); *De Superstitione*, *ib.*; *De Matrimonio*, Jerome (*Jouin.* 1. 49); speeches, Quint. 10. 1. 129. For the geographical works see p. 293.

tells us he found it necessary to start a crusade against it.¹ Writers like Juvenal and Tacitus seem to me to show direct sign of its influence. But the archaizing school of Fronto, which thought even Tacitus too sparing in his use of old Latin, found Seneca's style positively mean and bald.² The Christians, on the other hand, recognized in his matter the workings of a kindred spirit :³ one of them even went so far as to forge a correspondence of fourteen letters between him and St. Paul, which was known to St. Augustine⁴ and is still extant. Throughout the Middle Ages his reputation was fully equal to that of Cicero, and as the dawn begins to break we find Dante mentioning both together in a list of sages,⁵ Chaucer quoting him more frequently than any other save Ovid,⁶ Petrarch warmly admiring and addressing to him one of his letters to ancient authors.⁷ Even after Ciceronianism has begun to choke the growth of classical learning, Erasmus, Muretus and Lipsius deem Seneca worthy of their editorial care. To his teacher Muretus was probably due Montaigne's enthusiasm for Seneca, from whom and Plutarch he confesses to be for ever like the Danaids drawing water and emptying it.⁸ In England, although Ascham and the schoolmasters were under the ban of Ciceronianism, men of letters showed more taste : Jonson uses Seneca freely, whilst Lyly, Nashe, Daniel, Marston, and Lodge often quote him, the latter producing the first complete English version—a very

¹ 10. 1. 125 *sqq.*, where he passes an elaborate, and on the whole just, verdict on Seneca's literary and intellectual genius.

² Fronto, p. 156 N.

³ Tertull. *An.* 20 (*Seneca saepe noster*), Lactant. *Inst. Div.* 4. 24, Jerome, *Vir. Ill.* 12.

⁴ *Ep.* 153. 14.

⁵ *Infern.* 4. 140 *e vidi Orfeo | Tullio e Livio e Seneca morale.*

⁶ See T. R. Lounsbury, *Studies in Chaucer*, 2. 267 *sqq.*

⁷ *Epp. de reb. fam.* 24. 5.

⁸ *Essais* 1. 25.

bad one—of his prose. Bacon's *Essays* are avowedly inspired by the *Letters*,¹ Milton recommends the *Quaestiones* for school use, Cowley has an intimate knowledge of his work in general. On the Continent, Corneille and Racine draw by no means only upon his dramas, whilst Comenius admits the writings of one from whom he often quotes within the portals of his Latin school. In the first half of the eighteenth century English literary taste had much in common with that of Seneca's day, and the leading intellects are all familiar with the philosopher. Bolingbroke, censuring his character, confesses to reading him with pleasure: he might, in view of the debt he owes his writings, have added 'with profit.' Pope's *Essay on Man*, whether we look at its style or its discursiveness or the readers it presumes, is very Senecan. Later on, Rousseau and Diderot pay our author respectful homage, the former often quoting and borrowing, whilst the latter has written a thoughtful and discriminating defence of his character and style. But in England his influence is by this time dwindling, and with the nineteenth century he is almost everywhere ignored or censured: of writers belonging to this period who have avowed themselves his admirers I can recall only De Quincey and Sainte Beuve.² The warmest eulogy he has received in modern times comes from one who was anything but an avowed admirer. When Swinburne in an essay on Jonson's *Discoveries* wrote

We find ourselves in so high and pure an atmosphere of feeling and thought that we cannot but recognize and rejoice

¹ See his mention of Seneca in the dedication to Prince Henry written for the second edition of 1612.

² *Essai sur les règnes de Claude et de Néron et sur la vie et les écrits de Sénèque*, 1782,

216 SILVER AGE OF LATIN LITERATURE

in the presence and influence of one of the noblest, manliest, most honest and most helpful natures that ever dignified and glorified a powerful intelligence and an admirable genius,

he was of course not aware that the passage which he so highly extolled was a mere cento of Senecan epigram.¹

¹ For fuller details as to the history of Seneca's prose writings and their influence, see my edition of the *Letters*, Intr., p. xcvi.

CHAPTER IX

PROSE-SATIRE AND ROMANCE

AN amusing little work, which the best MS. ascribes to 'Annaeus Seneca' and entitles 'The Apotheosis of the deified Claudius, a satire,'¹ must, in view of its narrative form and verse insets, be assigned to the Menippean variety of p. 65. We are told, quite, one would imagine, in the style of the Roman daily journals, how the emperor lay long adying, how his spirit, at length released, sought admittance at the gate of heaven, how there was hot debate among the gods as to whether or no he should be received, how finally sentence of deportation to the nether world was decreed. Arrived, under conduct of Mercury, after being on the way convinced of his death by the sight of his own funeral procession, Claudius is met by a crowd of noblemen, victims of his stupid cruelty, and haled before Judge Aeacus. He is convicted unheard—'nothing new about that to him, but he thought it hard'²—and is just about to work out his sentence of backgammon, his favourite game, but to be played here with a dice-box that has no bottom, when Caligula arrives, proves him his slave by virtue of many drubbings given him in times past, and makes him over to Aeacus, who appoints him clerk to the court of the freedman Menander. A passage from the council of the gods may

¹ Quite literally, 'in satire form' (*per saturam*).

² § 14 *Claudio magis iniquum videbatur quam nouum.*

serve as a sample of the general contents and style of the work. A god is speaking :

' I move then that from to-day Claudius be a god, with all the rights conferred on any previous creation, a minute to this effect being added to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.' Opinion was greatly divided, but it began to look as if Claudius would win. For one thing, Hercules saw that it was his own iron that was in the fire, and went about whispering, ' Now you mustn't stick at it : it means a deal to me, and some time when you want something done I'll pay you back : one hand washes the other, you know.' Then came Augustus' turn to speak : he got up and made a fine speech. ' The House will bear me out when I say that from the moment I became a god I have never spoken a word. *Mind your own business* is my motto. But I can no longer hide my feelings or hold my anger, which my sense of decency intensifies. Was it for this that I won peace on land and sea ? Did I end the civil wars and give Rome a constitution and fine buildings only in order that—really, gentlemen, I don't know what to say : words are so inadequate to express my disgust. I must fall back on eloquent Messala's *mot*, " I blush to be an emperor." Why, gentlemen, this fellow here, who, you'd think, couldn't startle a fly, would chop off heads as cheerfully as a dog squats down on its hindquarters ! ' ¹

The whole piece is a perfect mine for colloquialisms, slang, and proverbial expressions, and there are some interesting hits at certain classes of contemporary society, fortune-tellers who never let a month go by unmarked as the one destined for the emperor's decease, poets with a passion for describing sunrise and sunset, philosophers who agree as ill as the city clocks.² The skill with which the author has introduced references to every single weakness of the hero's personality, as known to us from other sources, is very striking. Claudius' physique was poor, so we are told that on

¹ §§ 9 *sqq.*

² §§ 2, 3.

dying he 'ceased to present even the semblance of life.'¹ His articulation was feeble, and so word is brought to Jove that some one is at the door talking a language which no one can fathom, but which is certainly neither Greek nor Latin.² Hercules, the traveller, sent to try and identify it, thinks at first that he is confronted with a new monster, a thirteenth labour: closer inspection convinces him that it is a 'sort of human being.'³ When the emperor flies into a rage at being contradicted, 'for all the notice people took of him they might have been his—freedmen,'⁴ these latter having, as we have already seen, always had their master under their thumbs. The question he puts to the ghosts of the men whom he himself has sent to the scaffold, 'How came *you* here?' reminds one of the story about his asking why the empress had not come to table on the evening of the day of Messalina's death.⁵

Seeing that, if we had received this work in anonymous form and been set to find a likely author, our choice must have lain between the younger Seneca and Petronius, it seems foolish to argue that the Annaeus Seneca to whom the MSS. assign it cannot have been the philosopher, because, forsooth, Tacitus tells us⁶ that the philosopher, at Nero's bidding, wrote the funeral panegyric of Claudius. It may have been at Nero's suggestion that he composed this skit, which, once Nero had let the divine honours voted to his predecessor drop into abeyance (as we know, from Suetonius, he did⁷), was admirably adapted to fill a dull interval in one of those festive nights to which

¹ § 4 *desiit uiuere videri.*

² § 5.

³ § 5 *diligentius intuenti uisus est quasi homo.*

⁴ § 6 *putares omnes illius esse libertos—adeo illum nemo curabat.*

⁵ § 13: cp. Suet. *Claud.* 39. ⁶ *Ann.* 13. 3. ⁷ *Claud.* 45.

Juvenal ¹ makes reference. To adopt such a suggestion would doubtless have been weak and indecent in Claudius' panegyrist, but Nero's tutor made worse concessions than this to his pupil. Diderot seems to hit the mark when he observes ² that if he wished to criticize Seneca at all in the matter, *ce ne serait pas d'avoir écrit la métamorphose de Claude, mais d'en avoir composé l'oraison funèbre*. That the philosopher did write a satire on the deification of Claudius, Dio definitely assures ³ us, and the only ground for doubting that he refers to our work is afforded by the fact that he gives as its title, not *Apotheosis*, but *Apocolocyntosis*, a word, he goes on to imply, coined by Seneca on the analogy of the other. *Colocyntos* (gourd) was used in vulgar parlance to denote a person with a weak head, and it would certainly seem more natural for Claudius to become a gourd, in this sense of the word, than a god. The mere discrepancy between the titles is not very important, as a fatuous copyist may very well have substituted the obvious word 'apotheosis' for Seneca's witty neologism: the very redundancy of the MSS. title '*Apotheosis* of the *deified* Claudius' is suspicious. The real difficulty is that our work contains no hint of a gourd transformation. The only solution seems to be to suppose that we have lost the concluding portion, in which Seneca will have told how the emperor escaped Menander, very much as Daphne escaped Apollo, by metamorphosis into a product of the vegetable kingdom.

The satire is seldom quoted, yet it inspired Lipsius' *Somnium*, a skit on philosophers, and Boccacini's *Ragguagli di Parnasso*. Walpole writing to Mason in

¹ Juv. 4. 137.

² Essay cited on p. 215, Bk. I, Chap. 35.

³ Dio 60. 35.

1732 has discovered it and is much impressed by its wit; Rousseau translates it. Byron's *Vision of Judgment* is very like in scope, but does not borrow.

Tacitus has left us ¹ a somewhat detailed account of a nobleman named Gaius ² Petronius, who belied his reputation as a systematic debauchee by administering with vigour a provincial governorship and the consulate, but, quickly relapsing into his old habits, became a sort of Master of the Ceremonies (*arbiter elegantiae*) at the court of Nero, and then, in 66, being accused of treason, put an end to himself in a peculiarly phlegmatic manner, having his veins alternately opened and closed, whilst he banqueted or listened to the reading of frivolous verses. The historian makes no reference to his having written anything, but there can be little doubt that he was the Petronius who composed the realistic novel which we have next to consider. The MSS. call the writer Petronius *Arbiter*, and it is difficult to believe that this surname is wholly unconnected with the designation *arbiter elegantiae* which Tacitus has given to the courtier. The work itself is exactly what we should have expected from the pen of such a man. And it was almost certainly written under Nero. This forerunner of the so-called Picaresque novel must have been a voluminous work, for the fragments that have reached us and are by no means inconsiderable represent only its fifteenth and sixteenth books. They are unfortunately fragments not even of these themselves, but only of an extremely clumsy epitome. The motive connecting them seems to be summed up in the verses

¹ *Ann.* 16. 18, 19.

² *Plin. Nat. Hist.* 37. 20 and *Plut. Adul.* 19 call him Titus.

that conclude a little 'sonnet' thrown off by the hero in a moment of depression :

Thy bitter wrath o'er land and tumbling sea
Priapus, god of Hellespont, I flee ! ¹

How the divine anger has been excited does not appear, but Poseidon's persecution of Odysseus is not more relentless than that which Encolpius suffers at the hands of the amorous god. We find him staying with his bosom friend Ascyltos and a page-boy Giton in one of the Greek seaports of Campania, and at the moment engaged in discussion with a professor of rhetoric, named Agamemnon, as to the causes that have occasioned the decline of eloquence. He himself holds that the unpractical tendencies of the declamation schools and the cultivation of the purple patch are responsible. Agamemnon blames the parents who are eager to see their children out in the world and want rapidity rather than solidity in education.² We have lost the connecting paragraphs between this scene and the next, which itself is too outspoken to be even summarized here.³ The third scene comes with equal abruptness, disclosing the two friends ensconced in a corner of the market-place and endeavouring to sell a valuable cloak, acquired evidently by very doubtful means in some earlier chapter of the story. A yokel and a woman come over to examine it, and our heroes recognize in a ragged shirt, which the man has been trying to sell, an article from their own wardrobe, in the seam of which they know a considerable sum of money to be concealed. Whilst they are wondering what is to be done, the woman grabs the cloak and

¹ § 139 *me quoque per terras, per cani Nereos aequor | Hellespontiaci sequitur gravis ira Priapi.*

² §§ 1-5.

³ §§ 6-11.

charges them with being receivers of stolen property. A humorous scene ensues, as the young men's counter-claim to the apparently worthless shirt strikes the bystanders as the height of impudence. Finally, the yokel flings it in their faces and makes off with the cloak.¹ After another lacuna and another licentious scene² there begins the longest episode that has reached us, the banquet given by the parvenu Trimalchio and attended by our trio.³ Of this more will be said anon. Returning from it, Encolpius and Ascyltos have a quarrel, resolve to part, and prepare to divide up the belongings which they have hitherto shared in common. But Ascyltos reckons the page-boy among these, and, drawing his sword, threatens in the true Shylock vein to help himself to his rights. When at length Giton is called upon to make choice between them, he decides for Ascyltos, and our hero is left in solitude, bewailing in elegant verse the hollowness of friendship.⁴ Presently we find him in a picture gallery, trying to forget his chagrin in the contemplation of the works of Zeuxis and Apelles, and eventually accosted by an old man who explains the shabbiness of his exterior by revealing the fact that he is a poet, and develops the point in verse as well as prose.⁵ He goes on to display a nice taste in pictures, and, after deploring at length the mercenary tendencies of the day,⁶ illustrates a painting of the sack of Troy by the recital of over sixty iambics of his own on the episode of the Wooden Horse and Laocoon.⁷ Presently people begin to throw things, and they beat a retreat to the shore: it is not until now that our fragments reveal the newcomer's name, Eumolpus (Mr. Sweetsong).

¹ §§ 12-15.⁴ §§ 79, 80.² §§ 16-26.⁵ § 83.³ §§ 26-78.⁶ § 88.⁷ § 89.

Reproached by Encolpius for having, in the two hours they have been acquainted, 'spoken the language of the poet more frequently than that of the human being,' he promises to abstain from 'this form of nourishment' for a whole day, and is rewarded by an invitation to supper. There is a preliminary visit to the baths, where Encolpius finds Giton waiting, towels in hand, for Ascyrtos. As the boy is very penitent and pleads that he had felt bound to decide in favour of the man who had a sword, Encolpius hurries him home to his lodgings, leaving Eumolpus behind, spouting poetry as such as he loved to spout it within the echoing walls of the bath.¹ He arrives, however, in time for supper, during which he persists in verse-making, and gives such offence in other ways that his host asks him to 'get out quick.' So distressed is Encolpius at yet another experience of the hollowness of friendship that he resolves to commit suicide, and has just reared the couch up on end against the wall to serve as gallows when Eumolpus and Giton rush into the room, followed almost immediately by the waiter with the next course, who, observing the excitement and the erect couch, charges the company with the intent to decamp by the window and bilk the landlord. Eumolpus answers with a blow and gets by return a decanter in the face: a free fight follows between him and the whole staff of the flat.² Just as peace has been restored by the intervention of the manager, who knows the poet, the town-crier arrives with Ascyrtos, a constable, and 'quite a fair-sized crowd,' giving notice that one Giton has run away from his master and that a substantial reward will be given to any one bringing him back or betraying his whereabouts. By

¹ §§ 90-91.² §§ 92-95.

the time the search party reaches Encolpius' room, the boy has got under the bed, and, clinging to the webbing 'as Ulysses to the ram of Polyphemus,' escapes detection.¹ There is a lacuna here, but it is clear that Ascyrtos must have gone off discomfited—not to reappear in our fragments. Eumolpus and Encolpius, friends again, repair on board a ship bound for Tarentum.² After a brief lacuna we find our party terror-struck by the discovery that the captain is one Lichas, whom Encolpius has wronged in some manner no doubt described in some earlier chapters, and one of the passengers Tryphaena, a former flame of the hero's and the mistress from whom, at his suggestion, Giton had absconded. Eumolpus persuades his companions to have their hair and eyebrows shaved off and their faces inked over so as to give them the appearance of branded slaves. Hardly is the operation over than the enemy come on deck. They have dreamed dreams, the one that Priapus has assured him that he has lured Encolpius on board, the other that Neptune has informed her that Giton is on board. 'No reason why we shouldn't look round,' says the captain, and a passenger mentions having seen certain persons shaving. Now to cut hair on ship-board was regarded as likely to bring misfortune on the ship, and the offenders are sentenced to a flogging. Encolpius 'digested three strokes with Spartan heroism,' but Giton's howls bring Tryphaena's maids on the scene; they recognize their fellow-servant, and the truth is soon out.³ Things look very black, but Giton's threat to lay violent hands upon himself brings about the conclusion of peace. Dinner is served and then a scene of idyllic tranquillity ensues, during which most people

¹ §§ 96-98.

² §§ 98, 99.

³ §§ 100-105.

try to catch fish or gulls,¹ whilst Eumolpus tells the story of the Ephesian matron which supplied La Fontaine with one of his best *contes*.² Suddenly a storm bursts upon them, the ship begins to break up, Lichas is washed overboard, Tryphaena and her attendants get away in the boat, Encolpius and Giton are saved from the waves by wreckers. What happens to Eumolpus is not clear, but he is found later on by his comrades, apparently still in danger, scribbling verses, of course, and rather resenting the interruption of his rescuers. Next morning the body of Lichas is washed up at their feet : of Tryphaena's fate we hear nothing.³ The adventurers, proceeding inland, see from a hill the city of Croton where, they learn, the Roman art of legacy-hunting by flattery and toadyism is practised to perfection. There and then they evolve a plan of campaign : Eumolpus will pose as an invalid with huge estates in Africa, shipwrecked in the course of a voyage undertaken to dispel his grief for the death of his son, and his companions must be his slaves.⁴ So little do the responsibilities of his part weigh upon the principal actor that he beguiles the monotony of the road with a discourse on the difficulties of poetic composition in general and an epic on the Civil War in particular,⁵ followed by the recital of nearly 300 hexameters as an illustration of his theories.⁶ The rest is too Rabelaisian to sketch here : one can only mention that Encolpius has the ill-luck to provoke the god of love yet further by killing a goose that turns out to be sacred to him,⁷ that the plot thrives well enough until the ships Eumolpus pretends to expect from

¹ §§ 106-109.² §§ 111, 112.³ §§ 114, 115.⁴ §§ 116, 117.⁵ § 118.⁶ §§ 119-124.⁷ § 136.

Africa are regarded as very much overdue,¹ and that at the end a few tantalizing fragments preserve a clause of a will—presumably that of Eumolpus—by which a public meal off the testator's body is made obligatory on all legatees, and some sentences from a speech in which the condition is maintained to be easy of fulfilment.²

No matter whether Petronius is reproducing the graceful dialogue of educated Romans or the ungrammatical small-talk of tradesmen and parvenus, telling an elegant story or describing the sordid details of lodging-house life, he is always complete master of his style. His character-drawing is wonderfully vivid and skilful. And the literary criticism, which is a feature of the work, is by no means conventional, and, in the main, sound. Almost all he says in regard to the declamations is thoroughly to the point; perhaps no utterance of any ancient critic, save Aristotle, has been so often quoted as the *Horatii curiosa felicitas*, 'Horace's way of making careful art look like nature,' which Eumolpus drops on the road to Croton.³ The mere fact that his remarks on this occasion are perfectly serious should have made it impossible for any one to imagine that the hexameters which they preface were intended as a parody on Lucan's *Pharsalia*.

The other two merits appear so conspicuously in the Trimalchio episode that I have excluded it from the general summary in order to examine it here separately and from this special point of view. Trimalchio is a member of the uneducated but wealthy class which corresponds so closely to that of our modern parvenus. Whimsical dishes and tasteless entertainments are the main feature of his dinners. A peahen's egg contains

¹ §§ 125, 140, 141.

² § 141.

³ § 118.

a fully developed bird, which however proves to be a perfectly edible becafico, rolled up in yolk of egg.¹ A dish is marked out in sections representing the signs of the zodiac, on each section being placed some more or less appropriate article of diet—on the Lion, as representing August, a fig that needs hot sun to ripen; on the Twins a pair of kidneys. The guests are disappointed by a dish that seems more ingenious than appetizing, but it turns out to be the cover of another dish which itself is full of dainties.² The host's temporary withdrawal from table³ sets the tongues free, and we hear the bourgeois chatter and imperfect grammar of his cronies. Dama develops the theme, 'Very cold to-day, but a hot bath has been my salvation;'⁴ Seleucus protests that a daily bath isn't good for any one, as it wears out the body just as the laundry wears out clothes. He himself has been burying an old friend. 'Eh, dear! 'Twas but now he was talking with me! Inflated bladders we are, weaker than flies or bubbles. 'Twas the doctors killed him—if it wasn't predestination.'⁵ His neighbour interrupts with strong criticism of deceased's character,⁶ to be in turn taken up by Ganymedes. 'Not very interesting all this. No one seems to trouble about the price of bread! The market officials are in league with the bakers: "do me a good turn, and I'll do you one." O for the noble creatures that were here when I first arrived; that was life if you like. Safinius, for instance; pure

¹ § 33.² § 35, 36.³ § 41.⁴ § 41 *mundum frigus habuimus: uix me balneus calfecit.*⁵ § 42 *non cotidie laur: baliscus enim fullo est . . . fui hodie in funus. homo bellus, tam bonus, Chrysanthus, animam ebulliit, modo modo me appellauit: uideor mihi cum illo loqui. heu, eheu! utres rinflat! ambulamus, minoris quam muscae sumus. . . . medici illum perdiderunt—immo magis malus fatus.*⁶ § 43.

pepper he was, not a man at all ; yet he 'd nod back to us, and knew our names, just as if he were one of us. Why, I've seen bullseyes bigger than the loaf of to-day. We're growing backwards, like the calf's tail.' ¹ 'Oh, cheer up, please,' says the optimist whom the Nemesis of dinner-parties has set next him ; '*Turn and turn about*, as the countryman said when he lost the spotted pig. What doesn't come to-day, will to-morrow. If you lived somewhere else, you'd be saying this was the place where the pigs went about ready cooked. And the mayor's giving a fine show of gladiators, not the sort of thing Norbanus gave, with twopenny halfpenny, worn-out fellows that a good puff would have bowled over.' ² Then, suddenly turning upon the professor of rhetoric, 'Oh, I can see you saying *Why's this old bore talking?* Well, because you, who have the gift of the gab, won't use it—and then laugh at the things we humble folk say. One day I'll get you to come and see my little place in the country. We shall manage to find something to nibble, fowls and eggs and the like. . . . And then there's the little boy, getting old enough to be your pupil . . . One of his masters isn't very clever, but he takes a lot of trouble,

¹ § 44 *narratis quod nec ad caelum nec ad terram pertinet, cum interim nemo curat quid annona mordet . . . aediles male eueniat qui cum pistoribus collidunt : 'serua me, seruabo te' . . . o si haberemus illos leones quos ego hic inueni cum primum ex Asia ueni. illud erat uiuere ! . . . memini Safinium . . . piper, non homo . . . et quam benignus resalutare, nomina omnium reddere tamquam unus de nobis. itaque illo tempore . . . asse panem quem emisses non potuisses cum altero deuorare : nunc oculum bublum uidi maiorem . . . haec colonia retrouersus crescit, tamquam cauda uituli.*

² § 45 *oro te, melius loquere. 'modo sic, modo sic' inquit rusticus (uarium porcum perdiderat). quod hodie non est, cras erit . . . tu si aliubi fueris, dices hic porcos coctos ambulare. et ecce habituri sumus munus eccellente. . . . Titus noster magnum animum habet . . . dedit (Norbanus) gladiatores sestertiaros, iam decrepitos ; quos si sufflasset, cecidissent.*

and can teach more than he knows.' ¹ Trimalchio returns, and after much talk from him, and the reading of the estate gazette, ² there is an acrobatic performance, a dialogue in Homeric verse between companies representing Greeks and Trojans, and a hoop let down through a hole in the ceiling with golden wreaths and alabaster jars full of unguents hanging from it. ³ Niceros tells a were-wolf story, ⁴ which Trimalchio caps with an instance of witchcraft for which he can himself vouch. ⁵ Presently arrive the stone-mason Habinnas and his wife Scintilla, ⁶ who have come on from another party: the former is already drunk, and the tone of the entertainment begins to degenerate. Fortunata, Trimalchio's wife, who has been waiting on the guests, sits down to table and presently shows signs of a desire to dance; Scintilla 'claps her hands more often than she ventures a remark,' ⁷ the host invites the slaves to join them at table. He is setting them all free in his will, he says, has a copy brought in and read, and gives Habinnas an order for his tomb, on which himself and Fortunata, with her little dog on a lead, are to be represented, with a clock in the middle, 'so that any one that wants to know the time will have to read my name.' And the inscription is to read:

Here lies Trimalchio, on whom the Augustal priesthood was conferred by proxy. He might have joined any of the magisterial staffs at Rome, but declined the honour. God-

¹ § 46 *uideris mihi dicere 'quid iste argutat molestus?' quia tu, qui potes, non loquere. non es nostrae fasciae, et ideo pauperorum uerba derides . . . aliqua die te persuadeam ut ad uillam uenias et uideas casulas nostras: inueniemus quod manducemus, pullum, oua . . . et iam tibi discipulus crescit cicaro meus . . . est et alter (magister), non quidem doctus, sed curiosus, qui plus docet quam scit.*

² §§ 47-53. For the gazette, see p. 232.

³ For these items see §§ 53, 59, 60.

⁴ §§ 61, 62.

⁵ § 63.

⁶ § 65.

⁷ § 70.

fearing, staunch and true, he rose from nothing and left thirty million sesterii, never having attended in all his life a lecture on philosophy.¹

Every one begins to weep, and an adjournment is made to the bath.² On the resumption of the banquet, Trimalchio quarrels with his wife, flings a goblet at her—with deadly precision, threatens to dispense with her marble presence on his tomb. The picture is a vivid one: Fortunata in the arms of the shocked Scintilla, her bruised cheek pressed to the cool surface of a wine-jar held up by an obsequious slave, Habinnas playing the part of peacemaker.³ Trimalchio bursts into tears, then, recovering himself, bids the company be at its ease. ‘I myself was once as you: merit has made me what I am’—and he plunges into a retrospect of his early struggles,⁴ constantly broken by such thrusts at his wife as, ‘What, snorer? Still whining? I’ll make you sorry you ever were born,’ or ‘Didn’t the fortune-teller warn me I was nourishing a viper in my bosom?’⁵ At last he stretches himself on a sofa and calls for a rehearsal of his obsequies. Horns strike up the funeral march—but horns were also used to give fire alarms, and the brigade soon arrives, hacking its way through and spreading havoc everywhere with axe and bucket. In the confusion the adventurers effect their escape.⁶

The portrait of Trimalchio is a masterly combination of fidelity and caricature. He has no regard for the

¹ § 71 *C. Pompeius Trimalchio Maecenatianus hic requiescit. huic seuiratus absenti decretus est. cum posset in omnibus decuriis Romae esse, tamen noluit. pius, fortis, fidelis, ex paruo crevit, sestertium reliquit trecenties, nec umquam philosophum audiuit. vale: et tu.*

² § 72.

³ § 74.

⁴ §§ 75-77.

⁵ § 75 *sterteia, etiamnunc ploras? curabo fatum tuum plores, 77 ‘tu uiperam sub ala nutricas.’*

⁶ § 78.

feelings of his guests, reminding them that he had much bigger folk to dinner the day before.¹ Of course he loses no opportunity of parading his wealth. If silver plate is dropped, it must lie and be swept up later with the crumbs.² When the professor, asked to disclose the subject of the declamation he has that day delivered, begins 'A rich man and a poor man were enemies,' his host interrupts to ask, 'What is a poor man?'³ And to impress the company with the vastness of his property he has its *Gazette* read out during dinner—and an interesting document it is, our best source for knowledge of the lines on which the ordinary *Daily News* of Rome was run, with a birth column, a summary of the state of the money and wheat markets, a list of convictions, executions, divorces, and fires, police notices, and what not.⁴ At the same time, he would not have them think he lacks culture. Music accompanies his first entrance into the dining-room, the removal of dishes, and the pouring of water over the hands of guests:⁵ in the bath he himself 'murders a music-hall ditty.'⁶ He has 'two libraries, one Greek and the other Latin;'⁷ as for his skill as a connoisseur of chased goblets, 'I wouldn't part with it for any sum of money. I've got some that show Cassandra killing her sons, with the dead children so well done you'd think they were alive; yes, and Daedalus shutting Niobe up in the Wooden Horse.'⁸

¹ § 34.² § 34.³ § 48.⁴ § 53.⁵ §§ 32, 34, 31.⁶ § 73 (*carmina lacerare*).⁷ § 48.

⁸ § 52 *habeo scyphos urnales plus minus centum—quemadmodum Cassandra occidit filios suos, et pueri mortui iacent sic ut uiuere putes; habeo capides mille—ubi Daedalus Niobam in equum Troianum includit . . . meum enim intellegere nulla pecunia uendo*. Trimalchio manages to confuse five distinct legends: it was *Medea* who slew her children, and *Pasiphae* whom Daedalus concealed in a wooden cow.

The words *novel* and *romance* have no equivalents in Greek and Latin literary nomenclature. The Milesian tales, which Sisenna translated for the age of Sulla,¹ were probably *contes* such as form insets in Petronius' book, but can hardly have contained the germ of such a book itself. The so-called romances of men like Heliodorus and Longus, the dull, pedantic models of the *Grand Cyrus* and *Clélie* of the seventeenth century, are of posterior date to it, but the fact that one or two of its situations read like parodies of some that occur in those works has led to the suggestion that the whole motive of Petronius was parody of some fore-runner of theirs, old enough for him and his contemporaries to have read. But the differences of style and structure are much against this theory, and the probability is that the parodies that have been observed are directed against some source on which those later romances drew, such as the new comedy of Greece, rather than the romances themselves. The MSS. then probably represent good tradition when they use the phrases 'satires of Petronius' or 'Petronius the satirist' ² in the titles which they prefix to the work. Two of its most striking features, realism and interest in literary and aesthetic questions, figure prominently among the regular ingredients of Roman satire in general, and to these resemblances of matter comparison with the fragments of Varro's Menippean satires and the *Apocolocyntosis* enables us to add yet more striking resemblances of form and style. In all three compositions verse is employed as well as prose. Too little of Varro's satires has survived to enable

¹ *Ov. Trist.* 2. 443: cp. Fronto 62 N.

² *Petronii . . . satirarum liber, Petronii . . . satirici liber*
Petronii . . . Satyri fragmenta, Petronii . . . satiricon.

us to guess the proportion in which the two elements were there combined. In the other works prose gets the lion's share. In Petronius' verse, which is much more ambitious than that of the *Apocolocyntosis*, or, for that matter, as far as we can judge, the *Menippea*, hexameters, elegiacs, and hendecasyllables predominate. Many pieces contain considerable charm and elegance. Sometimes they are narrative, as is the case with those which describe the grove in which Encolpius keeps tryst with Circe or the simple cottage of the priestess of Priapus,¹ at other times they illustrate a narrative, as, for instance, where a lover's meeting is compared with that of Zeus and Hera in the fourteenth *Iliad*.² More often they form the climax of a prose speech or soliloquy, or amplify some maxim just enunciated in prose: an example in point may be found in the verses with which Eumolpus develops the theme 'love of letters makes no millionaires':

Who trusts himself upon the main
Doth so with ample hope of gain.
Who to the camp or battle hies
A purse of gold receives for prize.
The venal toady, flushed with wine,
On 'broidered purple may recline.
Who tempts another's wife to sin
Knows the reward he hopes to win.
'Tis letters only that must ever
In icy rags and tatters shiver,
And with vain eloquence implore
Aid of the arts men love no more.³

Once or twice, where a speech is impassioned, as in the case of Tryphaena's appeal to the angry Lichas, and Encolpius' prayer to Priapus, the whole is put in verse.⁴ Where the verses are not meant seriously, there is not much difference between the methods of the *Apo-*

¹ §§ 131, 135.

² § 127.

³ § 83.

⁴ §§ 108, 133.

colocytosis and those of our work : both, for instance, introduce Virgilian lines in an incongruous context, and both indulge in mock-heroics.¹ The general resemblance in tone between the novel and the *jeu d'esprit* cannot escape the notice of any one who passes from the perusal of one to that of the other. Both exhibit the same lightness and lucidity, the same vein of elegant raillery, a similar power to enlist the language of everyday life in the service of literary composition ; both, in short, are signal examples of the style for which Rome coined the word *urbanitas*, and which French prosaists have known so well how to employ. Varro, too, in his satires, has tried his hand at it—not very successfully, perhaps ; it was not a style that suited his genius too well, but nevertheless the fragments, preserved to us in most cases under circumstances by no means favourable to the survival of the fittest, do not unseldom exhibit a gaiety and sparkle positively astonishing to any one who knows the author only from the clumsy and wooden sentences of the greater works. One could hardly have clearer evidence that such a style was the conventional one for the Menippean satire he was writing. And of this Menippean satire our novel is simply a development, in which the story, dialogue, or scene that forms the framework of an individual piece becomes a more or less integral portion—a chapter, one might say—of a continuous narrative. The process would resemble that which, in drama, bore the name of ‘contamination’ and involved the blending together in a single Roman play of the plots of two or even more Greek ones. And until some papyrus is unearthed that contains the work of a Greek novelist

¹ See for Virgil Petr. 132, *Απόκ.* 3, for mock-heroics Petr. 108, *Απόκ.* 7.

as unmistakably the model of Petronius as Homer is of Virgil and Thucydides of Sallust, the Roman writer must be credited with the originality and ingenuity necessary for its conception.

Petronius is occasionally quoted by grammarians and writers on metre, whilst Macrobius and Sidonius refer to him from the point of view of subject matter.¹ In the Middle Ages he seems to have been little known, though John of Salisbury often quotes him, and one of the MSS. belongs to the tenth century. About 1420, Poggio discovered a MS. in Britain, and a few years later another at Cologne: the care with which he described his find to Niccoli shows that the author was a novelty to Renaissance scholars.² More than a century later, Scaliger had access to a MS. which contained fuller excerpts than any of those previously discovered, and a copy of this is still in existence. All this time only the opening chapters of the *Banquet* had been available, but in 1650 there was found at Trau, in Dalmatia, a MS. which, after finishing off excerpts already known to us with the notice 'Here end the fragments of Petronius taken from Books Fifteen and Sixteen,' proceeds to give, without any title, the text of the *Banquet* as it stands in all later editions.³ The discovery took place at an opportune date: in France, at any rate, much interest in it was at once displayed. Bussy-Rabutin made good use of the adventures at Croton in the *Histoire Amoureuse*, in which, to the indignation of Louis XIV. and his own undoing, he narrated the frailties of certain ladies of the court; the Grand Condé attended a meeting held to investigate

¹ *Somn.* 1. 2. 8, *Carm.* 23. 155 sqq.

² See A. C. Clark, *Class. Rev.* 1908, p. 178.

³ Clark l.c.

the genuineness of the new MS., St. Evremond expressed admiration for an author whose character had more than one point in common with his own, La Fontaine versified the anecdote of the Ephesian widow. Towards the end of the century one Nodot produced a greatly enlarged Petronius, but the additions, which professed to come from a MS. recently discovered at Belgrade, were quite unworthy of our author, and were probably Nodot's composition. Voltaire often mentions Petronius, remarking somewhere that his Trimalchio, as *un impertinent de la capitale du monde* quite eclipses an *impertinent de Paris* like Le Sage's Turcaret, and elsewhere chaffing the King of Prussia as one who can appreciate *un peu d'impureté quand on y joint la pureté du style*—a turn which our own Burton of the *Anatomy* anticipates with his 'fragment of pure impurities.'¹ Burton often cites Petronius, especially his verses: another Englishman who knows him well is Dryden, who not only respects his critical utterances, but sometimes echoes scenes and phrases of his.²

¹ *Anatomy of Melancholy* 3. 2. 3. 4 (itself presumably from Lipsius' *auctor impurissimae impuritatis*).

² Cp. e.g. *Annus Mirabilis* 138 *And so we suffer shipwreck everywhere* = Petr. 115 *si bene calculum ponas, ubique naufragium est*.

CHAPTER X

CORRESPONDENCE

PUBLIUS, the son of Lucius Caecilius Cilo some-time *quadriuir* or mayor of Comum,¹ was born in that town² in A.D. 61-62,³ lost his father in boyhood,⁴ and was probably brought up by his mother's brother,⁵ the Pliny of the encyclopaedia. He studied rhetoric under Quintilian,⁶ and in A.D. 79, when his uncle died and left him by will his adopted son and heir, abandoned the name of Publius Caecilius Secundus for that of Gaius Plinius Caecilius Secundus.⁷ Next year he began at the bar the career in which he soon became famous.⁸ In due course entering upon a senatorial career, he held under Domitian the quaestorship, the tribunate, the praetorship,⁹ and the presidency

¹ C. I. L. 5. 5279.

² Jerome, *Ad ann. Abr.* 2126. Pliny, though he more than once refers to his native town, never names it. But he mentions Comum and its lake in terms of peculiar affection (1. 3. 1, 2. 8. 1, 6. 24. 2 al. : cp. too 4. 30. 1), and several inscriptions to his name come from the neighbourhood. That his uncle was a native of Comum is certain.

³ *Ep.* 6. 20. 5 *agebam duodevicesimum annum* (on Aug. 24, A.D. 79).

⁴ There is no mention of him in the letters, which contain warm allusions to the memory of Pliny's guardian, the Verginius Rufus of p. 158 : see esp. 2. 1. 8.

⁵ The account in *Ep.* 6. 16. 4 *sqq.* suggests that Pliny and his mother lived with him.

⁶ *Ep.* 2. 14. 9.

⁷ *Ep.* 5. 8. 5 refers to the adoption ; the new name stands, e.g., in C. I. L. 5. 5262 (=Dessauer 2927).

⁸ *Ep.* 5. 8. 8.

⁹ See *Ep.* 7. 16. 2. The chronology of the letters has been the subject of much investigation : it seems generally agreed that these magistracies were held respectively in 89/90, 91/92, and 93.

of the military treasures.¹ Under Nerva he became president of the State Treasury:² for the Consulate he had to wait until the year A.D. 100, in Trajan's reign,³ three years or so later received the important priesthood known as the Augurate,⁴ and then, somewhere about 111, was sent out to govern Bithynia.⁵ We trace his activity here for more than sixteen months,⁶ but the inscription which recorded his, in part testamentary, benefactions⁷ to his native town does not give Trajan the style of *Optimus*, so that it looks as if he died before the emperor's assumption of it in A.D. 114.

Of Pliny's *Panegyric* I have spoken elsewhere,⁸ and am here concerned, first, with the collection of correspondence in nine books, for the publication of which he himself was responsible. The 247 letters represent 105 recipients, of whom Tacitus gets eleven, Fabatus, the grandfather of Pliny's wife, nine. The first of all is addressed to Septicius Clarus, the 'onlie begetter' of the publication, and informs us that each letter has been given a place as it came to hand, without regard to the date of its composition, and that if the experiment is successful a further series may be expected, made up of letters not used for the present collection, and any others that may by then have been written. As a matter of fact, however, these letters have been

¹ The office is recorded in the inscription. It seems to have been held 94-96 or 95-97.

² *Ep.* 10. 3A 1 alludes to this office, held apparently 98-101.

³ *Pan.* 92.

⁴ *Ep.* 4. 8. 1. An application of his to the emperor for an appointment of this kind is preserved in the thirteenth letter of Book Ten.

⁵ The date is rather uncertain.

⁶ In the letters of Book Ten.

⁷ C. I. L. 5, cited above.

⁸ See p. 133.

most carefully arranged, so as to ensure variety of theme, and, although here and there we come across a letter which must have been written before another which stands in a previous book, the general plan is unmistakably chronological. Letters, for instance, that describe different stages of an occurrence seldom come in wrong order, and the reader, passing through the successive books, moves steadily onward from 96/97 to 108/109. It may be that the correspondence was published in instalments, that Book One appeared by itself, and that Pliny's statement as to his neglect of chronology is intended to apply only to the contents of that particular book. But the evidence for such a mode of publication is not convincing. Nothing surely is proved by the fact that in a letter of Book Nine Pliny implies that his correspondent Rufus has read something he said in a letter to Albinus that belongs to Book Six.¹ For, apart from the fact that Albinus may well have shown Rufus the actual letter, the remarks with which an editor like Pliny credits his correspondents are not necessarily any more *bona fide* than the 'You ask me why . . .' with which Seneca often starts a letter to Lucilius.

Autobiography, in some form or other, a man like Pliny was bound to write. No one ever coveted fame, posthumous or present, more ardently; no one ever more naïvely confessed the weakness. Always appreciative of the compositions of a friend, he admits that he is apt to feel a particular admiration for those parts of them which refer to himself.² He bristles at

¹ Ep. 9. 19. 1 *significas legisse te in quadam epistula mea iussisse Verginium Rufum inscribi sepulchro suo*, etc.: this epitaph was mentioned in Ep. 6. 10. 4.

² Ep. 9. 8 *omnia scripta tua pulcherrima existimo, maxime tamen illa quae de nobis*.

the mere recollection of the young man whose clothes were almost torn from his back in the struggle to get into court and hear a seven hours' speech of his.¹ His indignation at finding the tomb of Verginius Rufus unfinished, ten years after the great general's death, is fanned by the reflection, 'Can I hope to fare better?'² What joy to hear that a stranger, whom Tacitus has met at the races and told that he probably knows the speaker from his literary work, promptly replied with the question, 'Are you Pliny, then, or Tacitus?'³ The autobiography of Lucilius had taken the form of satire, Pliny's is disguised in the prose letter for which Seneca had won a lasting place in literature. There is not a piece in the collection but is either written or carefully selected and carefully revised with an eye to publication. No leader-writer of present times could outdo our author in the art of evolving from some trifling incident a succession of reflections that are only sometimes new, but always interesting and always well put. It is indeed difficult to imagine a more suitable dress for Pliny's matter than the easy grace of his Ciceronian-Silver blend.

The contents of the letters fall under a comparatively small number of heads. The object of a very large number is to present us with a favourable picture of the author as a husband, a master, a citizen, and a friend. Separated from Calpurnia, who is gone to Campania for her health's sake, he writes to ask her to send one or two letters each day, and assures her that he misses her to an incredible degree, his feet, at the times when he has been accustomed to enjoy her society, carrying

¹ *Ep.* 4. 16. 2.

² *Ep.* 6. 10. 6 *cui non uerendum est quod uidemus accidisse Verginio?*

³ *Ep.* 9. 23. 2, 3.

him almost mechanically to her boudoir, 'from which I turn back dispirited and melancholy as a lover who has found his mistress not receiving.'¹ Of their life together he gives a pleasant description in a letter to his aunt, Hispulla, especially gratified by her habit of sitting behind a curtain when he gives a 'reading,' so as to enjoy without embarrassment the applause with which his efforts are received.² Pliny's slaves are allowed to make wills, which he faithfully observes,³ and their illnesses fill him with tender anxiety, so that he begs the owner of a country house that is famed for the quality of its air and milk to allow one of them who is slightly consumptive to stay there awhile;⁴ writing to ask a friend to keep an eye on a little farm that belongs to his nurse, he explains his anxiety for its welfare by the remark, 'Tis *her* property—but 'twas *I* gave it her.'⁵ He is no absentee landlord, as we gather from his descriptions of visits to farms where tenants, obviously encouraged by previous experience, are full of gloom and get their rents reduced.⁶ A man who builds a temple for the benefit of a town that lies near one of his estates⁷ is hardly likely to forget the town of his birth, and Pliny, not content with providing Comum with a library and an endowment for the support of its poor, but freeborn, children, helps to found a university there:

Last time I was home, the young son of a fellow-townsmen paid me a call. 'Do you study rhetoric?' I said.

¹ *Ep.* 6. 4. 5, 7. 5. *I interdium, quibus horis te uisere solebam, ad diaetam tuam ipsi me, ut uerissime dicitur, ducunt pedes . . . denique aeger et maestus et similis excluso a uacuo limine recedo.*

² *Ep.* 4. 19. 2 *sqq.*

³ *Ep.* 8. 16. 1.

⁴ *Ep.* 5. 19. 7.

⁵ *Ep.* 6. 3. 2 *quod (munusculum) esse quam fructuosissimum non illius magis interest quae accepit quam mea qui dedit.*

⁶ *Ep.* 5. 15. 8, 9. 37. 2; 8. 2. 1, 2.

'Oh, yes,' he replied. 'And where?' 'At Milan.' 'Why not here?' His father was standing by (he had brought the boy, in fact), and now put in: 'We've no teachers here.' 'But why not?' said I. 'Why, you fathers (and as luck would have it, there were several within earshot) would surely find it better to have your children studying here. Where could they have a pleasanter time than in their native town, better discipline than under their parents' eyes, cheaper living than at home? It would be no trouble to get up a subscription and engage teachers, and what you spend now on their lodgings, fares, and general expenses would go far to swell the fees. Look here: I've no children yet, but I'll give a third of any total you resolve to contribute. I'd give the whole amount, but I'm afraid we should have the scheme ruined by favouritism then. . . . The *parents* must choose the teachers: they'll see to it that my share goes to the right man, as theirs has to go to him too. . . . I only hope you'll get such professors that people will come from all around to study here.'¹

Numerous letters of recommendation² attest Pliny's devotion to his friends: in others we find him undertaking to provide them with the wherewithal of a daughter's dowry³ or entrance into the equestrian order,⁴ to sell land at a nominal price to the sister of one who is 'dead,'⁵ to find a tutor for the same man's nephew.⁶ No mission seems too delicate for him to undertake in their cause: once, when a man who owes a friend of his some money, dies without providing for the repayment, he asks another friend, well acquainted with the deceased's heir, to do his best to get the matter set right.⁷

Another considerable section of these letters is concerned with their author's public career. Important cases in which he was briefed are reported at con-

¹ *Ep.* 4. 13. 3 *sqq.*

³ *Ep.* 6. 32.

⁵ *Ep.* 7. 11.

² See e.g. 3. 2, 4. 15, 7. 22 and 31.

⁴ *Ep.* 1. 19.

⁶ *Ep.* 3. 3.

⁷ *Ep.* 6. 8.

siderable length,¹ everything done to blacken the character of Aquilius Regulus, in whom the new Cicero recognizes his Hortensius. How far professional jealousy will carry a man is well shown by the letters in which one who is in such matters usually a model of good taste, and is inclined to say the best he can for everybody save Domitian, sees fit to ridicule his rival's way of mourning a son's death, even hints that he may not after all regard the occurrence as an unmitigated misfortune.² We are not, of course, allowed to forget that our letters are the letters of a senator: a friend's advice is sought upon a point of parliamentary procedure,³ and amusing descriptions given of a 'scene in the House'⁴ and of the first introduction of the ballot⁵—when a few wits could not resist the temptation to cover the voting papers with flippant, even improper, remarks. Once or twice Pliny is clearly posing as one of the 'independents' of Domitian's reign. He reminds Tacitus of some 'brave words' with which he claims to have faced the anger of one of the tyrant's most formidable spies,⁶ and in a letter on visions and dreams writes as follows:

The young brother of one of my freedmen dreamed he saw some one sitting on the bed and applying a razor to his head. . . . When daylight came, his head was found actually shorn, with the hair lying all about. The occurrence was soon confirmed by something very similar. A slave boy was sleeping with several others in the dormitory, when two white-shirted beings came in at the window, shaved his head, and retired the way they had come. Day found him likewise shorn, with hair lying about.

¹ *Ep.* 2. 11 and 12; 3. 4 and 9; 5. 20; 9. 13.

² *Ep.* 4. 2 and 7: see esp. 2 § 1 *Regulus filium amisit, hoc uno malo indignus—quod nescio an malum putet.*

³ *Ep.* 8. 14.

⁴ *Ep.* 6. 5.

⁵ *Ep.* 4. 25.

⁶ *Ep.* 7. 33.

There was no very remarkable sequel, except that I escaped impeachment—and I should not have done so, had Domitian lived longer : an information against me was found among his papers. Men who are being prosecuted let their hair grow long, and one might conceive that the clipping of my servants' hair came as a sign that the danger threatening me had departed.¹

Whether Tacitus thought the 'brave words' worth mention or not the loss of the appropriate portion of the *Histories* makes it impossible for us to know. But Pliny's interpretation of the dream is certainly very unconvincing. Perhaps familiarity with the practical jokes of the modern boarding-school or university would have saved him from so much as mentioning it. Anyhow, the progress of his political career under the Terror squares but ill with the suggestion that his attitude towards it differed materially from that of other senators—and, if we may believe his own testimony, Tacitus.

Some scepticism is admissible, too, when we turn to the pieces which have for theme Pliny the man of letters. Our author was certainly a delightful writer and a good friend to literature, but he was also an incorrigible dilettante. When he tells us that he has chosen to do many things respectably because he felt unable to do any one conspicuously well,² he is a good deal nearer to truth than he would have us believe, perhaps than he is himself aware. The following passage is too significant :

I was never averse from poetry : why, at fourteen I wrote a Greek tragedy. *What was it like?* you ask. I

¹ *Ep.* 7. 27. 12 sqq.

² *Ep.* 9. 29. 1 *ut satius est unum aliquid insigniter facere quam plurima mediocriter, ita plurima mediocriter si non possis unum aliquid insigniter. Quod intuens ego uariis me studiorum generibus, nulli satis confisus, experior.*

don't know, but it was certainly entitled *A tragedy*. Later on, returning from military service, I was wind-bound at Icaria, and wrote some elegiacs on the island and the adjacent waters. I've tried my hand at epic too—hendecasyllables not till now. The history of their composition is as follows. In reading Asinius Gallus' comparison of his father and Cicero I came across a love poem of the latter's, and when I retired to take my siesta, not finding myself sleepy, I got musing on the fact that the greatest orators had affected and prided themselves upon that sort of work. I gave my mind to the matter, and in less time than I had expected, considering how long it was since I had written verse, turned out the following lines, on the very idea that had set me writing.¹

Cependant, je n'ai point étudié, et j'ai fait cela tout du premier coup! And M. Jourdain's prose is about as distinguished as the poetry which Pliny appends. Nor is it only his own work that so easily contents him. He talks quite seriously of the 'big crop of poets this year,'² and is convinced that if 'readings' come thick and fast all must be well with the world of letters. Himself a warm partisan of this institution, he feels deeply for a poet whose opening words—

Thou bidd'st me, Priscus,

were interrupted by a member of the audience, who happened to bear the name of Priscus and rudely protested, 'No, indeed, I don't!' ³ He speaks with bitterness of the people who come late and leave early, 'some looking ashamed and sheepish, but others behaving with bluff nonchalance.'⁴ The cruel fact is that no ancient writings bring out the weakness of the

¹ *Ep.* 7. 4. 2 *sqq.*: cp. 4. 14. 2 (hendecasyllables), 5. 3. 1 (*uersiculi*). In 7. 9. 11 he gives us another sample of his ability in this direction: see also p. 99.

² *Ep.* 1. 13. 1 *magnum prouentum poetarum annus hic attulit.*

³ *Ep.* 6. 15. 2 *sqq.* The words of the 'dialogue' are: '*Prisce, iubes.*—*ego uero non iubeo.*'

⁴ *Ep.* 1. 13. 2 *alii dissimulanter et furtim, alii simpliciter et libere.*

'readings' so clearly as Pliny's. Of many passages one could quote in illustration the most instructive is a *Vade-mecum for Recitation Audiences*, nominally addressed to Restitutus :

Praise the reader, be he better than you, worse than you, equal to you. For if he that is your superior deserves no praise, neither can you ; and if he is your inferior or peer, it must help your reputation that one whom you can match or excel should be rated high.¹

That he himself did not entirely rely on this means of eliciting criticism appears from the fact that several of the letters serve as cover for some composition which he is sending for revision to the addressee.² Of peculiar interest to students of literary history are four pieces which contain accounts of the works and manner of life of the elder Pliny, and notices on the deaths of this same writer, Martial and Silius.³ There are a few rhetorical themes, a plea for redundance rather than brevity in oratory being addressed to Tacitus,⁴ whilst elsewhere⁵ the view that the highest eloquence must sometimes approximate to bombast is boldly maintained.

Pliny's taste for the tranquil beauties of inanimate nature is by now become a commonplace of literary history. But the passages generally quoted in this connexion are not all of the same class, and there is a good deal of difference between letters like those on Lake Vadimo and the spring at Como⁶—mere curiosities of nature, which would have caught the attention of such men as Pliny's uncle—and those which describe

¹ *Ep.* 6. 17. 4. Bacon translates the passage, à propos of the 'arts of ostentation,' in his essay on Vain Glory.

² So, e.g., *Ep.* 1. 2 and 8.

³ *Ep.* 3. 5 and 6. 16 ; 3. 7 (Silius) ; 3. 21 (Martial).

⁴ *Ep.* 1. 20.

⁵ *Ep.* 9. 26.

⁶ *Ep.* 8. 20, 4. 30.

the source of the Clitumnus and the coast scenery near Centumcellae.¹ These last certainly breathe a genuine love of nature, such as we are too prone to regard as of comparatively modern growth. In other respects, too, this correspondence shows how easy it is to exaggerate the difference between Roman life and thought in the first century and those of, say, the English in the eighteenth or nineteenth. Many of the reflections with which these letters teem resemble closely those of Pope and his contemporaries in their correspondence, of Addison and his coadjutors in the *Spectator*.² The country squire who resents Pliny's attempt to talk down to his supposed level and diverts the conversation from the crops and the weather to matters literary,³ the old lady who so respects the susceptibilities of a serious-minded grandson who lives with her that when about to indulge in a card party or private theatricals she is careful to give him the timely warning that enables him to beat a retreat to his study⁴—here are pictures, presented in consecutive letters, that might well have been drawn by Fielding or Thackeray.

A MS. of the letters which was discovered at Paris in the early part of the sixteenth century, and is now lost, appended as a tenth book seventy-two official communications from Pliny to Trajan, of which fifty-seven are accompanied by the emperor's reply, and all save the first fourteen were made during the Bithynian governorship. As the collection breaks off suddenly it is possible that Pliny was not the editor: certainly it presents him to us in quite another light than that in which the nine-books' correspondence was intended to

¹ *Ep.* 8. 8; 6. 31. 15 *sqq.*

² See e.g. *Ep.* 1. 9. 1; 3. 16. 1; 7. 20. 1; 8. 20. 1.

³ *Ep.* 7. 25.

⁴ *Ep.* 7. 24. 5.

set him. The contrast between the fussy queries of the official and the quiet, dignified responses of the emperor is almost painful. Once¹ at least the latter is stung into something like a protest : ' It was because I wished you to settle Bithynia on your own lines that I chose a man of your sound judgment and experience to be its governor.' The most instructive of these letters are perhaps those which reveal the deplorable state of the self-governing cities, with bankrupt ambitions that must have fine squares and leave open beside them ' what is called a river, but is really a filthy sewer,' and begin two aqueducts without finishing either.² The most famous are no doubt Pliny's request for advice as to the procedure to be adopted in regard to persons accused of Christianity, and Trajan's reply. The former³ is the longest in the book. Pliny explains that he punishes only such as persist in declaring themselves Christians : ' I felt that whatever the tenets they professed, such contumacy called for punishment,' he says. An examination of two female slaves who had been employed at Christian gatherings has revealed nothing worse than an ' heretical and extravagant creed.' As the disease has spread widely, men and women of all ages and classes being involved, he is inclined to allow time for repentance. Trajan's reply is brief enough to be reproduced here :

You have taken the proper course, Pliny, in examining into the cases of persons charged before you with being Christians. It is impossible to lay down a general principle to serve as an invariable rule. There is no need to search for them, but if they are accused and convicted, they must be punished—save that any one who says he is not a

¹ *Ep.* 117 *sed ego ideo tuam prudentiam elegi ut formandis istius provinciae moribus ipse moderaris*, etc.

² *Epp.* 98 and 37.

³ *Ep.* 96.

Christian and proves it by his acts, by praying to our gods, shall, no matter how doubtful his past, be pardoned on the strength of his recantation. Anonymous informations must not be accepted in any kind of charge: such a course sets a dangerous precedent and runs counter to the spirit of our age.¹

Both letters were known to Tertullian,² who bitterly attacks their spirit. The nine-book collection inspired those of Symmachus and Sidonius in the fifth century, but whereas with the former its influence is confined to the general conception,³ the Bishop of Clermont avows himself at the outset⁴ its admirer and makes frequent allusions to its contents. In the Middle Ages Pliny's correspondence shared the fate of Cicero's in being ousted by that of Seneca and the Fathers. Einhart takes from it one of the two classical quotations which he allows himself in his own letters,⁵ and some good MSS. belong to the ninth and tenth centuries, but John of Salisbury and even Petrarch betray no knowledge of it whilst Walter Map's reference to Calpurnia is a second-hand one, with Sidonius for middle-man. Petrarch's admirer Coluccio Salutati possessed a copy, but the first Renaissance imitator seems to have been Politian. Erasmus often illustrates from Pliny his rules for letter-writing, and Ascham styles him 'the purest writer of all his age,' making some use of the letter *On Holiday Reading*.⁶ Montaigne draws from him two of the *trois bonnes femmes* to whom he devotes a chapter of the *Essais*.⁷ Pasquier, whose collection of

¹ *Ep.* 97.

² *Apol.* 2.

³ The concentration in a tenth book of all correspondence with emperors is obviously modelled on Pliny's book of Trajan letters.

⁴ *Ep.* 1. 1. 1. *C. Plinii disciplinam maturitatemque uestigiis praesumptuosis insecuturus.*

⁵ Manitius, *Gesch. der lat. Lit. des Mittelalters*, p. 644.

⁶ *Ep.* 7. 9.

⁷ *Essais* 2. 35.

letters is the first of the kind written in French, is one of Pliny's heirs, though it was with Voiture that Perrault's famous *Parallèle* matched the Roman. In England Pope's letters clearly follow Plinian tradition; his friend the Earl of Orrery translates the whole correspondence. Melmoth's version of 1746 was reckoned by Warton superior to its original. Some hundred years later Sainte-Beuve in the *Causeries du Lundi* shows himself an appreciative reader of an author of whom he is reminded by Cowper's letters, by a description from the pen of Henri Quatre, by Favre's house on Lake Geneva—and by a phrase of Flaubert's *Salammbô*.

CHAPTER XI

GRAMMAR, CRITICISM, AND RHETORIC

THE universities of Alexandria and Pergamum gave the name of grammar (*grammaticæ*) to the literary and linguistic studies with which the names of Aristophanes, Zenodotus and Aristarchus are especially connected : it was a contemporary of the latter's, Crates of Mallus, who brought them into fashion at Rome.¹ Of the work of Aelius Stilo, the first Roman who really deserves the title of *grammaticus*, and his famous pupil Varro, enough is known to prove that they occupied themselves with investigation into the history of their language, comment upon its oldest documents (which, in the case of Varro at any rate, extended into the region of antiquities), preparation of reliable texts, literary criticism and research, in short, philology in the widest sense.

The first writer of this kind belonging to our period is Fenestella, who died, according to the elder Pliny,² towards the end of the reign of Tiberius. His fragments³ show that he had a strong bent in the direction of antiquities. Seneca indeed definitely implies that the proper title to apply to a man with his interests was that of *philologus* rather than *grammaticus*,⁴ Suetonius who quotes him once⁵ does not include him in his list

¹ Suet. *De Gramm.* 2.

² *Nat. Hist.* 33. 146.

³ Peter, *Hist. Rom. Fragm.* p. 272.

⁴ *Ep.* 108. 31.

⁵ Suet. *Vita Terentii* (p. 292 Roth).

of *grammatici*, and Jerome describes him as a historian and poet.¹ Nonius quotes from a work of his entitled *Annales*,² but it does not follow that all the fragments we possess come from this. Anyhow, we find in the midst of the notices on matters connected with public and private life with which they abound a certain number that bear upon literary history,³ a combination that reminds us of Disraeli's *Curiosities of Literature*. Asconius and Pliny the elder quote Fenestella, the latter pretty frequently, and the Greek Plutarch appeals twice to his testimony.⁴

Quintus Remmius Palaemon⁵ was born in slavery, but learned much in the course of his attendance upon his master's schoolboy son, and on gaining his freedom set up as a teacher. He had a great vogue under Tiberius and Claudius, in spite of a personality that suggests the charlatan: against the boastful arrogance that led him to maintain that the Palaemon who is umpire in one of Virgil's singing contests foreshadowed himself, the future arbiter of poesy, and call Varro a pig, must be set the fact that Persius and Quintilian were among the products of his school.⁶ His textbook, which Juvenal's blue-stockings loves to consult,⁷ is now lost, but it is probable that Quintilian's observations upon grammar,⁸ in the course of which he intro-

¹ *Ad ann. Abr.* 2035.

² So, e.g., s.v. *reticulum*.

³ Suet. l.c. (Terence cannot have come to Rome as a prisoner of war), Gell 15. 28. 4 (Cicero's age at the time when he delivered the *pro Roscio*).

⁴ Asconius thrice (see Clark's edition, p. 5); Plin. *Nat. Hist.* e.g. 8. 19, 9. 65, and the *indices* to six books; Plut. *Crass.* 5, *Sull.* 28.

⁵ Suet. *De Gramm.* 23, whence, in the main, comes the account on the text.

⁶ We learn this from the Persius biography, and the scholia on Juv. 6. 452 respectively.

⁷ Juv. l.c.

⁸ *Inst. Or.* 1. 4-8. The name of Palaemon occurs in c. 5 § 60.

duces the name of his old master as an example of the rule that Greek *-ων* becomes Latin *-o*, were influenced by it.

About the beginning of Nero's reign,¹ Quintus Asconius Pedianus, a native of Padua, dedicated to his sons a commentary on Cicero's speech, a portion of which was discovered by Poggio at St. Gall, in A.D. 1416. Points of language are almost entirely ignored in it, and Suetonius does not reckon the author among his *grammatici*. Quintilian, however, quotes him as his authority for certain peculiarities of spelling which he attributes to his countryman Livy,² and we know that he wrote a book entitled *An Answer to the Detractors of Virgil*, in which he made the famous remark as to its being easier to rob Hercules of his club than Homer of a verse.³ The Latin of the commentary is simple and clear, an excellent model for dissertations that have to be composed in the same language. Quintilian and Gellius refer to it, and Silius pays the author the compliment of introducing an ancestor of his among the figures of the *Punica*.⁴

The elder Pliny's *On Doubtful Points of Language*,⁵ written towards the end of Nero's reign, was, if we may judge from the fragments preserved to us by Charisius, a severely technical production. But the work of Marcus Valerius Probus of Berytus⁶ seems to have breathed a spirit not unlike that of Varro himself.

¹ Jerome, *Ad ann. Abr.* 2092. The extant work falls between A.D. 54 and A.D. 57, Claudius being dead and a Caecina whose death occurred before October 57 still alive: see p. 27 Clark.

² *Inst. Or.* 1. 7. 24.

³ Donatus, *Vita Vergilii* (printed in e.g. Reifferscheid's *Suetonius*).

⁴ Quint. 5. 10. 9, Gell. 15. 28. 4, Sil. 12. 212 sqq.

⁵ Plin. *Ep.* 3. 5. 5 'dubii sermonis octo (libri)': *scripsit sub Nerone nouissimis annis*.

⁶ Suet. *De Gramm.* 24, whence comes the account in the text.

Weary of vain attempts to secure an appointment as centurion, he turned to literature and began to study the early Roman literature which, long since neglected at Rome, was still read in Syria. Presently he began to collect copies and compare readings, to constitute texts and annotate them, making use of critical marks such as the Alexandrians had been accustomed to employ,¹ and finally producing editions of Lucretius, Virgil, Horace, and Persius.² He gave instruction too, though not in any formal way, preferring to gather a few choice spirits around him and then, in the course of ordinary conversation, let fall some critical remarks. He left behind him a considerable body of materials, but had actually published little. From his Persius edition comes a life of the poet which our MSS. preserve: a little treatise on abbreviations bearing his name is still extant, and is generally accepted as an extract from one of his works.³ He seems to have flourished under Nero and the Flavian emperors. Suetonius' list makes him follow Palaemon, Martial uses his name to denote 'the critic *par excellence*,'⁴ and Gellius has some interesting specimens of his table-talk, gathered from the lips of men who had heard it.⁵

We might pass now to the study which regularly succeeded grammar in the Roman education, but for two books which, though mainly concerned with rhetoric and oratory, nevertheless contain much critical matter. Lucius Annaeus Seneca was born in

¹ Cp. the *Fragm. Paris.* in *Gramm. Lat.* 7, p. 534.

² For the three first see the Paris fragment, for the fourth the Persius biography. Traces of his work on Virgil are found in Gell. 13. 21. 4 and Servius.

³ *Gramm. Lat.* 4, p. 271.

⁴ 3. 2. 12 *illo vindice, nec Probum timeto*. Book Two is generally assigned to A.D. 87-88.

⁵ 1. 15. 18, 6. 7. 3. etc.

an equestrian family at Corduba about 55 B.C.¹ Exactly when he came to Rome, where he obviously lived for a considerable time, is uncertain, but it was presumably after the civil wars, during which, he informs us, he remained at Corduba.² By his wife Helvia he had three sons, of whom the eldest, adopted by his father's friend the rhetorician Gallio and known thenceforward by his adopted father's name, was the governor of Achaëa before whom St. Paul was arraigned, the second was the philosopher Seneca, and the third, Mela, was Lucan's father.³ There is something of old Cato about this Spanish Roman, who is the impartial enemy of both philosophy⁴ and rakishness,⁵ despises the contemporary Greek,⁶ and will have no higher education for women.⁷ He survived Tiberius,⁸ but was evidently not alive when Seneca was banished in A.D. 41.

Of Seneca's historical work mention has been made already on p. 151; my introductory chapter owes much to the book which we have here to consider. It is dedicated, as so many Roman books are, to the author's sons, and is the product of his old age: some of the

¹ For the few sentences left of the biography by his son see p. 151¹. *Mart.* 1. 61. 7 attests his birthplace, *Tac. Ann.* 14. 53 the status of the family, and he himself implies that he was old enough in 43 B.C. to have appreciated Cicero's skill in declamation: *Contr.* 1. pr. 11 *bellorum civilium furor intra coloniam meam me continuit; alioqui in illo atrio in quo duos grandes praetextatos ait secum declamasse* (a reference to an event of the year 43) *potui adesse*.

² *Contr.* l.c.

³ Cp. *Tac. Ann.* 16. 17, *Sen. Helu.* 2. 4.

⁴ *Sen. Ep.* 108. 22.

⁵ *Contr.* 1 pr. 8 sqq.

⁶ Witness his frequent ridicule of the Greek declaimers (e.g. 1 6. 12).

⁷ *Sen. Helu.* 17. 4 *utinam quidem . . . pater meus minus maiorum consuetudini deditus voluisset te praeceptis sapientiae erudiri potius quam imbui*.

⁸ The language of *Suas.* 3. 7 proves that Tiberius is dead.

contents cannot have seen the light before the death of Tiberius. The title, *Oratorum et Rhetorum Sententiae, Divisiones, Colores* may be translated 'choice sayings, distributions of heads, and palliatives from the works of orators and rhetoricians.' Ten books are concerned with *controuersiae* (declamations on legal subjects), one with *suasoriae* (declamations of a deliberative character): each contains from six to nine themes. Of the *controuersiae* books we have only five in fairly complete condition with their prefaces (devoted to an account of one or more of the chief declaimers) and their declamations (excerpted and discussed under the three heads indicated in the title of the work). The other five books are represented only by two complete prefaces and an abridgment of the declamations in which the treatment of the themes is most mercilessly pruned down.

A work which aims at being more than a mere textbook and yet consists mainly of fragments from the compositions of others than the author is, as will be guessed from what has been said on p. 175, somewhat of a rarity in ancient literature of a good period. There is, however, no reason to doubt that the extracts are genuine quotations. Seneca lays claim to a good memory,¹ and no doubt had good notes. His literary contribution consists in the prefaces and the frequent insets of his own with which he varies the monotony of the extracts. Of the light Seneca throws upon the personality of the leading declaimers and the contempt that some of them felt for the declamation I have already spoken. Perhaps the most interesting of the prefaces is the first of all, with its attempts to explain the decline of oratory as the outcome of the general

¹ *Contr.* i. pr. 2.

decay in the moral fibre of the nation. But all the Senecan matter abounds with interesting fragments of literary criticism and delightful anecdotes. A typical passage is one in which Seneca mentions how the grammarians fell foul of a poet who wrote, in a description of soldiers taking their rest on the day before the battle,

stretched at their ease
'This day, at least,' they say, 'is all mine own,'¹

when the rules required him to say, 'all *our* own,'¹ maintains that the expression is perfectly correct, and protests against such cavilling being exercised on works of genius.² As specimens of the anecdotes the following pair may serve :

It was not that Ovid did not know the faults he committed as a poet : he admired them, as we can see from the fact that, when his friends asked him to cancel three lines of his, he replied that there were just three that he could not have them interfering with. It seemed a reasonable proposal, and so they withdrew and wrote down the verses they wanted cancelled, whilst he put those down he wished to keep. And behold, the lists proved to be identical.³

At the celebration of his games, Caesar, having made Laberius appear in a mime, there and then restored him his nobility, and invited him to take his place in the seats reserved for his order. But the other members of it proceeded to sit close together so as to leave no room for him. Caesar had just added a number of members to the senate . . . and Cicero making the two incidents an opportunity for a jest sent his page to Laberius to say, 'If I were not so cramped for room I would have given you a place at my side.' But Cicero himself was in bad odour as one that had toadied to Caesar and Pompey, without being really a

¹ *Suas.* 2. 12, *stratique per herbam* | '*hic meus est*' dixere '*dies !*'

² *Suas.* l.c. 13, *grammaticorum calumnia ab omnibus magnis ingeniis summouenda.*

³ *Contr.* 2. 2. 12.

friend to either, and so Laberius retaliated with the comment, ' You, who like to have two chairs to sit upon at once ! ' ¹

The best MSS. of the work belong to the tenth century. The fame of the philosopher Seneca seems gradually to have extinguished the memory of his father ; Gerald of Cambray, Roger Bacon, and Petrarch evidently regard the *De Causis* (their usual title for our book) as the work of the son.² Some of its themes inspired tales that were included in the *Gesta Romanorum*.³ Montaigne and Jonson knew it ; the theme, and some expressions, in Massinger's *Bondman* suggest the influence of a declamation from Book Seven ; and Corneille's famous *qu'il mourût* is surely an echo of the ' Do you ask me what he was to do ? Why, die ! ' with which the prosecutor answers those who make excuses for a man who has, at the bidding of a tyrant, assaulted his own father.⁴

The other critical treatise to which I referred above is the *Dialogue on Orators* which Enoch of Ascoli discovered, under circumstances already detailed,⁵ along with the *Agricola* and *Germania*. It seems on the whole probable that all three works were by the same author. Later MSS. definitely assign the *Dialogus* to Tacitus : it is by no means certain that Enoch's did. Panormita, mentioning the three works in 1426, speaks definitely of ' Tacitus' *Germania* ' and ' the same writer's *Agricola*, ' but in regard to the *Dialogus*, says simply that he conjectures it to come from Tacitus. And Panormita's knowledge of these works is almost certainly derived from the statements of the monk of

¹ *Contr.* 7. 3. 9. The phrase *duabus sellis sedere* was evidently an equivalent for the ' sit on the fence ' of modern days.

² See e.g. Gerald of Cambray, *Ep.* 31.

³ See p. 7.

⁴ *Contr.* 9. 4. 16.

⁵ See p. 192.

Hersfeld, who in his turn can hardly have had any other MS. in mind than that which Enoch afterwards discovered. On the other hand, Decembrio, heading a list of some newly discovered books which he has actually seen at Rome in 1455 (the year Enoch brought his MS. thither) with our three, definitely ascribes all alike to Tacitus.

The *Dialogus* presents us with other problems besides that of its authorship. If Tacitus wrote it, then (in view of what is stated on p. 164) he must have written it after the *Agricola*. But in that work the main characteristics of the style which distinguishes the *Annals* and *Histories* from other Silver works are already clearly apparent. How is it then that he is so Ciceronian in the dialogue? We know that the rhetorical schools made a great point of imitation, we have seen that with the epic writers the cult of Virgil is little more than a confession that his *Aeneid* is being taken as a model: is it surprising that in this *De Oratore* of the Silver age the author should have set himself to reproduce the style of the most famous exponent of this particular genus of Roman literature? As a matter of fact, even in points of vocabulary and phraseology, some fairly striking resemblances between the language of the historian and that of the author of the *Dialogus* have been observed, and the personalities of the two writers, nowhere strongly contrasted, are in one or two points, such as their attitude towards the constitution and the moral condition of Rome, in striking agreement. The thorniest question of all, that as to the *dramatic* date, it is impossible to handle adequately in the space at my disposal here, and I must content myself with stating my conviction that as one of the two characters who mention the fact that

one hundred and twenty years have elapsed since the death of Cicero in 43 takes the trouble to enumerate the items on which the calculation is based—assigning, for instance, ‘twice fourteen’ years to Claudius and Nero, by which of course is meant ‘fourteen *apiece*’¹—we cannot possibly, in order to get over some minor difficulties, explain away that total as a mere round number, but must definitely regard the conversation as assumed for A.D. 77/78. Of a third difficulty, occasioned by the loss of part of our text, it will be better to speak a little later.

The argument is as follows. The rhetoricians Aper and Secundus call upon Curiatius Maternus, and the former, reproaching his host for having abandoned the bar in order to devote himself to play-writing, indulges in a panegyric of oratory and a depreciation of poetry. Maternus defends his choice,² and Vipstanus Messalla coming in and joining in the conversation³ soon reveals himself as an opponent of the ‘new rhetoric.’ Aper⁴ maintains that there is no essential difference between the orators of their day and those of Cicero’s: what difference there is represents simply the sound taste of modern audiences for point and elegance. Messalla⁵ begins to attack the moderns, but being reminded⁶ that he has promised to say something as to the *causes* of the decline which he assumes proceeds to throw the blame on the indifference

¹ § 17 *statue sex* (MSS. *noeu* which cannot be right) *et quinquaginta annos quibus mox Augustus rem publicam rexit; adice Tiberii tres et uiginti, et prope quadriennium Gai, ac bis quaternos denos Claudii ac Neronis annos, atque illum Galbae et Othonis et Vitellii longum et unum annum, ac sextam iam felicitis huius principatus stationem qua Vespasianus rem publicam fouet: centum et uiginti anni ab interitu Ciceronis in hunc diem colliguntur.* I take *statio* here in the sense ‘stage,’ almost ‘period,’ *principatus* as a genitive of definition.

² §§ 11 sqq.

³ § 14.

⁴ § 16 sqq.

⁵ § 25.

⁶ § 27.

of parents to the moral character of their children, the narrowness of the school curriculum, and the unpractical nature of the declamation. At this point¹ we get an unintelligible sentence which is evidently the outcome of the telescoping of two intelligible sentences into each other, and some MSS. state that 'six pages'—of their archetype, presumably—'have been lost': anyhow, the rest of Messalla's speech has gone. The distribution of the next six sections is not certain. The last of them is spoken by Maternus,² as the section which immediately follows it, describing the breaking-up of the party, begins with the words, 'Here Maternus concluded.' And, if our MSS. may be relied on, all six must be his: there is no indication of a change of speaker. But there can hardly be any doubt that before Maternus spoke, Secundus (whose participation in the dialogue Maternus himself had promised)³ must have offered some remarks. It is possible, of course, that the whole of these has vanished in the 'six-page' lacuna. A careful examination of the six sections will, however, incline the reader to reject this hypothesis. For although these are all concerned with the topic 'republican constitution favourable to the growth of eloquence,' the standpoint with which they begin is not the one with which they end. There, the view that eloquence thrives best under conditions that may be in themselves undesirable is mentioned only to be dropped as irrelevant; here, it is emphasized in tones that remind us of the long feud between rhetoric and philosophy. The two attitudes are exactly those which we should expect Secundus and

¹ At the end of § 35 (*cum ad ueros iudices uentum rem cogitaret nihil humile uel abiectum eloqui poterat*).

² § 41.

³ § 16.

Maternus respectively to adopt. It can hardly be through mere coincidence that we get, just at the point of cleavage,¹ a sentence which, in its present form, seems to me, on purely linguistic grounds, to begin with peculiar abruptness: those who assume here yet another lacuna, in which the end of Secundus' speech and the beginning of that of Maternus have fallen out, are probably right.

The dramatic qualities of our work are considerable. The character of Secundus is a little colourless, but then we have lost his speech, and we know from Quintilian that lack of combativeness was a weakness of his.² The other persons are flesh and blood creations, comparing in this respect quite favourably with those of most Ciceronian dialogues: Maternus, the votary of literature, delighted at having shaken himself free of the necessity 'every day to do something or other that goes against the grain;' ³ Aper, the brilliant, shallow, utilitarian, sure that there cannot be much wrong with a pursuit out of which he can make money; Messalla, the man of insight, whose power to put his finger on the weak points in the armour of eloquence, is stigmatized by superficial observers as pessimism.

The educational standpoint, too, is most interesting. With the old days, when children were entrusted to the care of some woman relative of approved character, who kept an eye even upon their hours of relaxation and so trained them that they had no insuperable difficulties to meet when they came later on to specialize as soldiers, lawyers, and orators,⁴ Messalla contrasts very unfavourably the present system which leaves

¹ § 40.

² See p. 131.

³ § 13 *necessitate cotidie aliquid contra animum faciendi.*

⁴ § 28.

them to a Greek slave-girl and one or two of the least capable men-slaves, whose ignorance and tittle-tattle soon demoralize them. Town boys think of nothing but the theatre, the gladiators, and the races, and their teachers discuss these matters with them more readily than anything else. It isn't the moral tone of a school and the evidence of ability to teach that get a man a connexion: what is necessary is to be able to 'play the toady in a drawing-room and to cast the various baits of flattery.'¹ A protest against the narrow view of education which is often nowadays disguised by the use of that sounding word *vocational* is worth quoting:

There are many subjects the mere knowledge whereof is a help to us even when we are not actually engaged upon them, making itself apparent in the least likely places. . . . So completely is this forgotten by the 'eloquents' of to-day that one can detect in their speeches the uncouth, unseemly inaccuracies of colloquial speech, that they know nothing of statute law or parliamentary proceedings, openly scoff at civil law, are downright afraid of philosophy and the teaching of the sages, drive eloquence from her kingdom and debase her into a matter of a few common-places and some beggarly conceits. And so she that was once the queen of sciences, filling our minds with the fair company of these her ladies, has now been cut down and trimmed about, has lost her pomp and state—I might almost say her gentility—and is studied as the basest of the mechanic arts is studied.²

There are no ancient references to the *Dialogus*, and the moderns but rarely mention it. Elyot, Montaigne, and Boileau know it, Dryden speaks of it as the work of Quintilian (a theory with which Wotton shows himself

¹ § 29 *colligunt discipulos non seueritate disciplinae nec ingenii experimento, sed ambitione salutationum et illecebris adulationis.*

² § 32.

acquainted in *Ancient and Modern Learning*), William Pitt's impromptu version of one of its sentences ¹—'It is with eloquence as with flame: it requires fuel to feed it, motion to excite it, and it brightens as it burns'—is deservedly famous.

I pass to professed writers upon rhetoric. The abridged version by Publius Rutilius Lupus of a treatise on oratorical figures composed by the younger Cicero's rhetorical teacher Gorgias may belong to our period, though it is not certain that it was not published under Augustus. Only the part dealing with the figures of speech has reached us, and it is of little interest.² Quintilian, however, several times cites the book,³ and implies that it was respected by a writer upon rhetoric whose views he often quotes, the Cornelius Celsus whose nearer acquaintance we shall make in the next chapter.⁴ His treatise has not reached us, but a scholiast's note upon a passage of Juvenal,⁵ in which that poet describes lady lawyers as 'quite capable of giving Celsus a lecture on the art of composing *Exordia* and commonplaces,' mentions that it ran to seven books. Quintilian also occasionally quotes the elder Pliny as an authority on his subject,⁶ referring, no doubt, to the *Studiosus* ('The Rhetorical Student'), in which he mapped out an ideal course for the aspirant to oratorical

¹ § 36 *magna eloquentia sicut flamma materia alitur et motibus excitatur et urendo clarescit.*

² It is edited in Halm's *Rhetores Latini Minores*. That it is an abridgment appears from 2. 12, where the reader is referred for further details to the original.

³ See, e.g., *Inst. Or.* 9. 2. 101, 102, 106.

⁴ *Inst. Or.* 9. 2. 102.

⁵ 6. 245: *principium atque locos Celso dictare paratae*. Quintilian cites Celsus twenty-two times: for a criticism of his views see *Inst. Or.* 7. 1. 10, 9. 1. 18.

⁶ 3. 1. 21, 11. 3. 143.

fame, and collected a number of 'best things' from the declamations.¹

This work has not reached us, but we still possess an exhaustive treatise dedicated to the orator Vitorius Marcellus by Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, who was born about A.D. 40 at Calagurris in Spain,² studied at Rome under Palaemon,³ and there made himself familiar with the best oratory of the day.⁴ He must subsequently have returned to Spain, for in A.D. 68 he came in the train of Galba, who had been governor of the province, once more to the capital,⁵ where he was appointed, presumably by Vespasian, to a state-endowed professorship of eloquence,⁶ which he held for twenty years,⁷ reckoning the younger Pliny among his pupils,⁸ and receiving that rarest of distinctions for a man of his class, the 'consular decoration.'⁹ At what time he published a treatise on the causes of the decay of oratory, to which he makes occasional reference,¹⁰ but which has not reached us, is quite uncertain. Somewhere about A.D. 88 he resigned his professorship, and presently set to work upon his *magnum opus*, the

¹ Plin., *Ep.* 3. 5. 5 'studiosi tres (libri)' . . . quibus oratorem ab incunabulis instituit et perfecit, Gell. 9. 16 sqq. libros reliquit quos 'Studiosorum' inscripsit . . . in his libris . . . refert plerasque sententias quas in declamandis controuersiis lepide arguteque dictas putat (and an example cited).

² Jerome, *Ad Ann. Abr.* 2104 gives his birthplace (cp. Auson. *Commem. Professor. Burdigal.* 7). The year of birth has to be inferred from *Inst. Or.* 6. 1. 14, which shows him to have been *adulescens* in A.D. 57.

³ Schol. on Juv. 6. 452.

⁴ For his relations with Afer see p. 130.

⁵ Jerome, *Ad Ann. Abr.* 2084.

⁶ Jerome, *Ad Ann. Abr.* 2104: cp. Suet. *Vesp.* 18.

⁷ *Inst. Or.* 1 pr. 1: *post impetratam studiis meis quietem, quae per uiginti annos erudiendis iuuenibus impenderam.*

⁸ See p. 238.

⁹ Auson, *Grat. Act.* 7. 31: *consularia per Clementem ornamenta sortitus.*

¹⁰ 6 pr. 3 *librum quem de causis corruptae eloquentiae emisi*, al.

composition of which occupied two years.¹ About a quarter of it was completed, when he was called upon to supervise the education of two grand-nephews of Domitian.² The date of Quintilian's death is unknown.

Book One of the *Institutio* deals with the nursery and the school. Book Two gives a picture of the ideal teacher of rhetoric, describes the exercises of his school (which culminate in the declamation), defines rhetoric, investigates its aims and claims to the title of science. Book Three is severely technical, but among its numerous classifications is one under five heads of oratory, which is all important for the arrangement of the bulk of the work. First comes *Inventio* (the method of finding out something to say), the treatment of which begins in this book, where rules for its use in epideictic and deliberative oratory are furnished, and is continued in the next three, where its application to judicial speeches is discussed according to the sections into which these were regularly divided, Exordium, Narrative, Proof, Refutation, and Peroration. Book Seven deals with the second head of *Dispositio* (arrangement), which is studied mainly in connexion with the *status* or general heads, under some one of which the main issue of a case must fall. The next three books are devoted to *Elocutio* (style), rules being given for the use of ornament, the arrangement of words, the acquisition of a copious vocabulary, the imitation of models, the preparation of speeches, and the development of extempore powers.³ Book Eleven, except for the

¹ I pr. I implies that he started upon it a considerable time after the retirement, and the introductory letter to Trypho says that its composition has occupied two years. The date generally assigned is A.D. 92.

² *Inst. Or.* 4 pr. 2.

³ Books Eight and Nine deal with ornament and order of words.

first chapter, which really belongs to the previous section, inculcating the necessity for tact in the application of the rules for style, is concerned with *Memoria* and *Pronuntiatio* (a term that is extended to cover elocution, delivery, stance, even dress). Book Twelve deals with the orator himself and the oratory which he produces. Under the first point Quintilian considers the moral and intellectual equipment which he requires, the age at which his activities should begin, the kinds of brief that he should or should not undertake, his obligation, when once he has decided on the former course, to study the case with thoroughness; under the second, he introduces us to the styles of oratory, drawing some interesting parallels between them and those of painting and sculpture. In the last chapter he urges retirement in good season from active service, and concludes with a protest against the possible impression that he has proposed an ideal that is not susceptible of realization.

The *Institutio* is one of the most valuable products of our period, but it is difficult to find any considerable passage that calls for special notice or translation—a most unusual phenomenon in a literature that so habitually sacrifices the whole to the part. The proem to Book Six, in which Quintilian mourns the loss of a wife and two sons, is much admired, but it is in no way typical. The critical estimate of the chief writers of Greece and Rome which occupies most of the first chapter of the tenth book, and which, it must always be remembered, professes only the standpoint of the rhetorical student's needs,¹ has long since become a commonplace of the literary histories. Most interest-

¹ 10. 1. 45 *genera ipsa lectionum quae praecipue conuenire intendentibus ut oratores fiant existimem persequor.*

ing, as a specimen of our author's thoroughness and definiteness, is a chapter in which he takes one of the stock declamation themes and enumerates successively the points of view which the average student, the less superficial student, and the methodical and reflective student will discover therein.¹ Unfortunately, it is very technical, and far too long to quote here. Perhaps nothing short of actually reading the work through is more likely to give a clear idea of its character than the study of an abstract of the educational creed and the didactic methods to which it so eloquently bears witness.

Plain as is the influence upon Quintilian of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and Cicero's kindred writings, plain as is his debt to numerous other predecessors whom he quotes or whose language he almost reproduces, the *Institutio* has nevertheless the unity and individuality of an original composition. Having taken the stock rules of the rhetorical schools and tested them in the fire of practical common sense, Quintilian has illustrated those which he has found fit to survive with all the resources which long experience and an acute judgment have put at his disposal. Ancient rhetoric suffered severely at the hands of men who believed that classification was synonymous with explanation: Quintilian sets his face against such views, saying repeatedly, 'No matter what the label, provided we know what is meant.'² He notes, pertinently enough, that the frequency with which authorities are found to differ is partly due to the vanity of teachers who would fain reckon among those who have contributed some-

¹ 7. 1. 42-62.

² 3. 6. 2 *nec interest discentium quibus quidque nominibus appelletur, dum res ipsa manifesta sit.*

thing to their subject.¹ As for rules, to make a fetish of them is to crush initiative.² After all, they are but the outcome of general observation, and should always give way before the special needs of the case, or that part of it with which we are at the moment concerned.³ They obviously cannot cover everything: painters and potters have often to represent an animal or produce a vessel that they have never learned to attempt before.⁴ This, of course, does not mean that it is all a matter of genius, that there is no need to study. 'No one need imagine that he is going to get eloquent at the cost of some one else's exertions: we must cut down sleep, persevere, strive, get pale, and form our own powers, our own experience, our own method. . . . You can show a man his way, but every one will have his own pace.'⁵ With the modern sentimentalist and his unwillingness to give young brains serious work Quintilian would have little sympathy. 'To learn is as natural to man as flight to birds, speed to horses,' he says,⁶ and holds that the young possess almost unlimited capacity for sustaining mental effort—just as they can fall down again and again, and never hurt themselves.⁷ Of course, the pace must not be forced too early, and we must not, in the desire to get on to more showy work,

¹ 3. 1. 7 *ad ea quae rudia atque imperfecta adhuc erant adicientibus quod inuenissent scriptoribus, mox, ut aliquid sui uiderentur adferre, etiam recta mutantibus.*

² 4. 2. 85 *amentis est superstitione praeceptorum contra rationem causae trahi.*

³ 5. 10. 120 *neque enim artibus editis factum est ut argumenta inueniremus, sed dicta sunt omnia antequam praeciperentur: mox ea scriptores obseruata et collecta ediderunt* (cp. Cic. *De Or.* 1. 146), 2. 13. 2 *erat rhetorica res prorsus facilis et parua, si uno et breui praescripto contineretur. sed mutantur pleraque causis, temporibus, occasione, necessitate:* cp. 4. 1. 64.

⁴ 7. 10. 9.

⁶ 1. 1. 1.

⁵ 7. 10. 14.

⁷ 1. 12. 8-10.

introduce short cuts that really only hinder progress.¹ Quintilian is a close observer and gives due weight to psychological considerations, emphasizing the importance of studying the idiosyncrasies of the pupils,² appreciating the value of questions as a means for securing their attention and leading them on to find out things for themselves.³ He advocates the taking of places in class⁴ and competitive stimulus in general: 'ambition may be a vice, but it produces virtues.'⁵ He has some excellent rules for correction of written work,⁶ and tells an amusing anecdote of how a well-known professor, finding his nephew plunged in despair by a theme over which he had spent two days without being able so much as to start upon it, smilingly suggested that he might be trying to write better than—he could.⁷ Of the teacher's saving gift, the sense of humour, our book shows many signs: one sees it in the very representative collection of Roman jests contained in the chapter on Laughter,⁸ in such sallies as his criticism of the doctrine which held that counsel who had the facts against them should dispense with narrative altogether: 'An easy rule that—an easier

¹ I. 4. 22 *quod monere superuacuum erat, nisi ambitiosa festinatione plerique a posterioribus inciperent et, dum ostentare discipulos circa speciosiora malunt, compendio morarentur.*

² 2. 8. I *sqq.*

³ 2. 5. 13 *sic* (by the use of questions) *audientibus securitas aberit . . . simulque ad id perducentur quod ex hoc quaeritur, ut inueniant ipsi et intellegant.*

⁴ I. 2. 23 *non inutilem scio seruatum esse a praeceptoribus meis morem, qui cum pueros in classes distribuerent ordinem dicendi secundum vires ingenii dabant, et ita superiore loco quisque declamabat ut praecedere profectu uidebatur* (24) . . . *ea nobis ingens palmae contentio, ducere uero classem multo pulcherrimum. nec de hoc semel decretum erat: tricesimus dies reddebat uicto certaminis potestatem.*

⁵ I. 2. 22 *licet ipsa uitium sit ambitio, frequenter tamen causa uirtutum est.*

⁶ 2. 4. 10-14.

⁷ 10. 3. 13, 14 (*numquid tu 'inquit' melius dicere uis quam potes?*).

⁸ 6. 3.

were not to plead at all ! ' ¹ in the passage where, after maintaining that pupils profit as much from a critical lecture on some famous speech as from the correction of exercises of their own, he slyly adds, ' And they like it better : every one would sooner hear some one else's errors criticized than his own.' ² Generally speaking, one is struck by Quintilian's breadth of view. Of course he shares the prejudice of his age, that education must mean rhetorical training. But it is noticeable that he does once or twice take cognizance of the special requirements of those who were not proposing to become barristers, pointing out, for instance, that the composition of imaginary speeches of Cato or Cicero was a very useful task for the future poet or historian.³ More important is the loftiness of his ideals in regard to the education which his orator will require. ' I want no one for a reader who is going to calculate how much his profession is likely to bring him in,' he says in an early chapter, and one of his last sentences contains a similar protest against mercenary estimates of the value of his subject.⁴ His curriculum is even more ambitious than that which Cicero's Antonius regards as so overloaded—it is, he expressly notes, to turn out something of a sage, but a sage who is still a Roman, a man equal to the turmoil of public life and yet possessed of the moral qualities of a philosopher.⁵ These lofty

¹ 4. 2. 66 *et sane nihil est facilius—nisi prorsus totam causam omnino non agere.*

² 2. 5. 16 *quin immo etiam iucundius (erit) : aliena enim uitia reprehendi quisque mauolt quam sua.*

³ 3. 8. 49 *poetis quoque aut historiarum futuris scriptoribus plurimum confert.*

⁴ 1. 12. 17 *ne uelim quidem lectorem dari mihi quid studia referant computaturum : cp. 12. 11. 29.*

⁵ 12. 2. 7 *illum quem instituo Romanum quemdam uelim esse sapientem, qui non secretis disputationibus sed rerum experimentis atque operibus uere civilem uirum exhibeat.*

conceptions are not accompanied by any contempt for mere detail. It is characteristic of our author that a twelfth part of his work is occupied with quite elementary education. 'There is no such thing as a trifle, where learning is concerned,' he explains, when stopping to discuss whether a composition should be in the first stage done on wax tablets or parchment: with the latter he feels that the constant necessity of recourse to the inkpot tends to clog the flow of thought.¹ Like Hippocrates, he is not ashamed in the interests of science to confess that certain views of his have changed with the years; ² nay, he admits that by the time he discovered the proper mode of teaching a particular thing, he had got so accustomed to the old one that he found himself unable to use it very effectively.³ And he feels that he knows but little even now. 'It is a mighty subject,' he says, 'with many ramifications: fresh points come up almost every day, and the last word on it will never be pronounced.'⁴ What a contrast to the frivolous promises and boastful claims of some of his successors in the chair of education!

Quintilian is more than a teacher of rhetoric. His strictures upon the 'fine writing of to-day,' ⁵ with its admiration for the corrupt 'just because it is corrupt,' its scorn for 'everything that Nature has dictated,' ⁶ prove him a critic of real insight. His sense of proportion is so strong. Seeing, as plainly as Petronius

¹ 10. 3. 31 sqq. (*nihil in studiis paruum est*).

² 3. 6. 63 sqq.

³ 2. 5. 2 *longa consuetudo aliter docendi fecerat legem*.

⁴ 2. 13. 17 *late fusum opus et multiplex et prope cotidie novum et de quo numquam dicta erunt omnia*.

⁵ 10. 1. 43 *recens haec lascivia deliciaeque*.

⁶ 2. 5. 10 *non laudantur modo . . . sed, quod est peius, propter hoc ipsum quod sunt prava laudantur*, 8 pr. 26 *nos . . . quibus sordet omne quod natura dictavit*.

and the author of the *Dialogus*, the weak points of the declamations, he still maintains their utility when constructed on proper lines,¹ even allows that some of the departures from forensic practice are made in the learner's interest and may be justified.² He concedes 'much merit' to the moderns, and holds that their tendencies are not to be entirely ignored.³ The chapter on imitation, the theory of which we have seen more than once in this book exercising considerable effect upon the style of Roman literature, is full of interesting observations, one of which, directed against the making one's chief model one's only model,⁴ should have protected him from the libel that makes him the first Ciceronian. He has, of course, the utmost respect for the great orator, and it is hard to understand how even so blind a Ciceronian as Ascham could discern in him a 'lust to dissent from Tully.' He draws most of his quotations from Cicero's speeches and gauges a young man's powers by the measure of his admiration for them.⁵ But Quintilian's grammar, vocabulary,⁶ ornament, even the run of his sentence, are those of the Silver Age: only a superficial observer can be deceived by the fact that, following his own principles, he has made a comparatively sober and sparing use of its chief mannerisms.

Quintilian had attacked the influence of Seneca upon literature:⁷ Fronto's archaizing school seems to have done the same for Quintilian. For years afterwards, save that Jerome tells us that Hilary of Poitiers

¹ 2. 10. 3 *sqq.*

² 4. 2. 29: cp. also 2. 10. 5 (quoted on p. 14²).

³ 2. 5. 23, 12. 10. 45 *sqq.*

⁴ 10. 2, esp. § 24 *non qui maxime imitandus et solus imitandus est.*

⁵ 10. 1. 112 *ille se profecisse sciat cui Cicero ualde placebit.*

⁶ See e.g. the lexicons, s.v. *circa* and *citra*.

⁷ See p. 214.

imitated his *Institutio*, and the fourth-century rhetorician Julius Victor borrows wholesale from him, he appears only as the author of declamations. These indeed were all that Petrarch at first possessed of him, but by 1350, when he penned our author a letter,¹ he had obtained the other work, though only in the mutilated form in which the Middle Ages seem generally to have known it. The discovery of the complete book was due to Poggio's researches at St. Gall. Its influence upon educationists like Vittorino, Aeneas Silvio, Guarino, Agricola, Bebel, Erasmus, Melanchthon, and Vives was immense.² Elyot uses it freely in his *Governour*, Ascham, who twice quotes it slightly, borrows at least once, with but inadequate acknowledgment, from it. Comenius seldom mentions Quintilian, but Rollin's *Traité* makes good use of his principles, and French composition masters sing his praises to this day. He shares with Lucretius and Catullus the rare honour of having received warm praise from so severe a critic of Roman letters as Theodor Mommsen.³

Two collections of declamations have reached us under Quintilian's name. One, which consists of nineteen complete pieces, the only things of the kind that exist, contains passages which Jerome and others quote as his work.⁴ The declamation which has for theme the destruction of a poor man's bees⁵ by a millionaire who resents their trespasses upon his estate,

¹ *De reb. fam.* 24. 7.

² See A. Messer, *Q. als Didaktiker und sein Einfluss auf die didaktisch-pädagogische Theorie des Humanismus in Neue Jahrb.* 1897.

³ *Provinces*, I. 77 (E. T.).

⁴ Jerome, *De Cev. Pasch.* I, Servius on *Aen.* 3. 661, Ennod. *Dict.* 21, etc.

⁵ *Decl.* 13.

has achieved a certain fame, being mentioned, for instance, by Cowley in his essay on solitude. Style and vocabulary make it difficult to believe that this collection is older than the second century.¹ The other, which is, like Seneca's book, an anthology, seems to me worthy of the first century, and not improbably the outcome of Quintilian's activities. That it was actually composed by him is unlikely: he never mentions it, as he does other publications of his, and the subjects and treatment alike are not what we should expect to find in a work belonging to his latest years. But he does mention once that on two occasions pupils of his published, on their own account, a *réchauffé* of the notes they had taken at his lectures,² and, although there are difficulties in the way of believing that our collection is identical with either of those productions, it may very well have arisen in a similar way.

¹ That declamations that were not Quintilian's had been introduced into a collection of those that were is stated by Trebellius Pollio, *Trig. Tyr.* 4. 2: *fuit (Postumus Iunior) ita in declamationibus disertus ut eius controuersiae Quintiliano dicantur insertae.*

² *Inst. Or.* I pr. 7 *duo iam sub nomine meo libri ferebantur artis rhetoricae neque editi a me neque in hoc comparati. namque alterum, sermone per biduum habito, pueri quibus id praestabatur exceperant; alterum pluribus sane diebus quantum notando consequi potuerant interceptum boni iuuenes, sed nimium amantes mei, temerario editionis honore vulgauerant.*

CHAPTER XII

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL PROSE

I. MEDICINE

AULUS CORNELIUS CELSUS, of whom Columella speaks as a contemporary¹ and whose agricultural work was used by a Graecinus who perished on the scaffold under Caligula,² wrote upon agriculture, medicine, rhetoric, military science, philosophy, and perhaps law.³ He was perhaps the author of an encyclopaedia like that in which Varro had treated, along with medicine and architecture, the seven liberal arts that afterwards constituted the mediaeval *trivium* and *quadrivium*. At any rate, as the MSS. of his medical treatise, the only one that has reached us, entitle its first book the 'Sixth Book of the Arts,' it is clear that this must have been part of a larger work. That the five previous books were

¹ I. I. 14 *non minorem tamen laudem (than Varro, Virgil, Hyginus) meruerunt nostrorum temporum uiri, Cornelius Celsus et Iulius Atticus.*

² There can be little doubt that the Graecinus who used Celsus (Plin., *Nat. Hist.* 14. 33) was the Graecinus whose execution is mentioned in Sen. *Ben.* 2. 21. 5, Tac. *Agr.* 4. 1.

³ For his agricultural and rhetorical works see pp. 283, 265 respectively; for one on military science, Quint. 12. 11. 24, a passage which may fairly, in view of the context, be taken to imply works on philosophy and law. That Celsus did write on the former subject is certain: see p. 195.

concerned with agriculture some passages of this same treatise make almost certain.¹

Celsus can hardly have been a specialist in all the subjects upon which he wrote, and it is scarcely to be doubted that he was not a medical man. Pliny² does not style him *medicus* as he does the Roman doctors Opilius, Granius, and Caecilius, and occasional remarks like 'I prefer drastic remedies,' or 'I cannot remember a case of cure by this method,'³ are quite compatible with his having been a landed proprietor who personally supervised the nursing of his slaves. It was not mere chance that led him to make his medicine follow immediately on his agriculture: Cato's book on farming gives prescriptions for men as well as beasts. Nevertheless, he has a good acquaintance with the works of men like Hippocrates, Heraclides of Tarentum, Asclepiades, Themison, and Philoxenus.⁴ And if an attempt to do for Greek medicine what Cicero has done for Greek philosophy necessarily results in something of less literary interest than the *Academica* or *De Finibus*, it must not be forgotten that in reproducing his authorities Celsus displays a clarity of thought and style for which students of those famous works sometimes sigh in vain. The mannerisms of Silver Latin find little scope in the *De Medicina*, which indeed supplies us with convincing proof of the ability of a plain, yet elegant Latin to support the strain which the needs of a highly technical subject must put upon any generous and dignified language.

¹ See the opening sentence *ut alimenta sanis corporibus Agricultura sic sanitatem aegris Medicina promittit*, and cp. 5. 28. 16 *sicut in pecoribus proposui*. That the agriculture work was in five books we know from Colum. 1. 1. 14.

² See the indices to Books 28 and 29.

³ 3. 24; 7. 7. 6.

⁴ The first four of these he cites pretty often, Philoxenus he only mentions (in the preface to Book 7).

The first four books handle *Dietetics*, the last of them, in which diseases of particular parts are discussed, opening with an account of the internal organs. *Pharmacology* occupies Books Five and Six, and the remaining two are devoted to *Surgery*. As Book Eight is mainly osteological, its first chapter gives a description of the human skeleton. The prefaces to Books One and Seven are particularly readable, the latter giving a brief outline of the history of surgery, and summarizing the qualities requisite for success therein, whilst the former contains a fairly full history of medicine, in which justice is done to the dispute between Empirics and Theorists, and Celsus takes up the middle position, that experience is paramount, but the knowledge of nature has its part to play, that dissection is necessary, vivisection (of criminals) not, since the special knowledge it gives can be acquired, at greater trouble no doubt, but more decorously, by the examination of wounds.

Celsus has the open, critical mind of the intelligent layman. He believes in the existence of remedies not recorded in the text-books,¹ realizes that Hippocrates' rules for the feeding of invalids are vitiated by his regard for the mystics and the theory of numbers,² is never impressed by a mere name :

The same remedies do not suit all. That is why famous physicians have sung the praises of one thing after another as the one and only remedy, according as each in turn has yielded good results. So when a given treatment does not have the desired effect, it isn't right to think more of its advocate than your patient.³

¹ See e.g. 4. 7 *sub fin.*, 5. 28. 7, 6. 9 *sub fin.*

² 3. 4 (p. 81, Daremberg). ³ 3. 1. (p. 75 D.).

Sometimes one suspects him of having his tongue in his cheek :

There's nothing new in the method by which some doctors cure patients who have failed to improve under the care of safer men. . . . After the death of Hippocrates there arose one Petro, who would take a patient with fever on him, smother him up in blankets to make him very hot and thirsty, and then, when the fever began to abate a little, give him cold water to drink : if he thus got a sweat, he reckoned he had effected a cure ; if not, he plied his man with more cold water, etc., etc. . . . And this constituted his whole science, which men whom the Hippocrateans had failed to cure rated as highly as do nowadays people who have been ever so long under representatives of the school of Erasistratus or Herophilus, without getting relief. All that doesn't, of course, make the method any the less rash : people who get it at the start usually die. . . . It's more likely to succeed with other men's patients than your own.' ¹

He likes to emphasize the fact that the best of rules must be modified by special circumstances, and twice in this connexion expresses his contempt for the men who want to shirk the hard work their profession involves :

These ' general rules ' are a godsend for men who run large nursing homes ; and find the task of thinking out the needs of the individual uncongenial. ²

There is only one way of deciding if a patient can have food or not—to visit him frequently and test his strength : so long as he has a reserve, you can persevere with the fasting, but when you're afraid that he's getting weak, you must come to the help with nourishment. . . . It is obvious from this that one man cannot attend many patients, but of course a large practice pays best and they who think only of their incomes welcome with open arms a treatment that involves no close attendance. ³

He can be severe on patients too, whether they be

¹ 3. 9 (p. 91 D.).

² 1 pr. (p. 11 D.).

³ 3. 4 (p. 80 D.).

ladies who want pimples and freckles removed,¹ or *bons vivants* who

dictate to their physician their times for food, or, if they make him a present of the hour, claim the right to fix the amount, or else, leaving these points to him, want a free hand as to its character, and think they are treating him most handsomely in all this, as though it were a question of his powers, not their cure.²

The elder Pliny used this work,³ but its reputation seems to have declined by the beginning of the fifth century, when Marcellus in his book on medicines could confuse it with that of Scribonius.⁴ Between that date and the Renaissance period it is rarely cited, though some of the MSS. belong to the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth centuries. In 1426 Panormita describes newly discovered MS. (since lost) to Guarino, a pupil of whose unearthed next year a more complete copy which still ranks among our best sources for the text.⁵ The *editio princeps* of 1478 is one of the earliest of printed books. Bacon and Milton cite or recommend the work, whilst Johnson, confessing in one of his letters that he has been consulting it in regard to a fever, remarks, 'I would bear something rather than Celsus should be detected in error.' The value of the work nowadays lies, of course, in the deliberate and well-ordered summary which it contains of almost all

¹ 6. 5 (p. 224 D) *paene ineptiae sunt curare uaros et lenticulas et ephelidas—sed eripi tamen feminis cura cultus sui non potest.*

² 2. 16.

³ See the indices to Books 20-29 and 31. Celsus is also cited in those to the non-medical Books 7, 8, 10, 11, 14, 15, 17-19, but in some of these cases the reference will be to his agricultural work. So certainly in the case of Books 14, 15, 17, and 18: cp. 10. 150.

⁴ Reproducing the dedicatory letter of Scribonius to Callistus, he heads it 'Cornelius Celsus to Callistus.'

⁵ Sabbadini, *Le Scoperte dei codici Latini e Greci*, pp. 99, 103.

that was best in ancient practice and teaching down to the time of its composition.

Another medical work that belongs to our period is a collection of prescriptions (*compositiones*) addressed by the physician Scribonius Largus to Callistus, one of Claudius' freedmen. The preface and (alas! too rare) digressions are written in literary Latin, and whilst the latter are mainly of antiquarian interest and brief, a specimen of the former seems to me desirable. Scribonius has been dwelling upon the ignorance which medical men show in reference to the history of their own science, and now proceeds :

It is quite the exception for a man to take any trouble to ascertain the credentials of the doctor to whose charge he proposes to entrust himself and his family. And yet, no one would think of having his portrait painted by any one whose skill had not been tried and approved in various ways, and every one likes to have correct weights and measures, so as to prevent the possibility of mistakes occurring in regard to matters that are by no means vital. The fact is, there are people who regard anything as of more importance than their own persons. And so there is no longer any compulsion put upon medical men to study, and some of them, not content with knowing nothing about the ancient physicians to whom is due the state of perfection which the science has now attained, have the audacity to invent lies about them. And when no attempt is made to differentiate between one man and another, good and bad being put in the same class, all regard for training and method disappears, and men devote themselves to the attainment of what will cost less trouble, and yet in all probability bring as great a name and as large an income.¹

The work must have been published at some time between the British expedition of A.D. 43, to which it alludes, and the fall of Messalina, whom it mentions

¹ P. 4, ed. Helmreich.

with respect, in A.D. 48,¹ Marcellus Empiricus borrows freely from it, and then we hear no more of it until 1528, the year of the *editio princeps*: the MS. upon which this was based has vanished, and no other is known to us.

2. AGRICULTURE

Of Celsus' agricultural work in five books² our knowledge is slight and is derived mainly from Columella's not infrequent references to it. Most of these are highly technical, but some idea of the style of the composition may be gathered from his remark that it is impossible to give rules for the treatment of beehives with more elegance than his predecessor³ has done. It was used by the elder Pliny.⁴

Lucius Junius Moderatus Columella himself was a native of Gades⁵ and a contemporary of his fellow-countryman, Seneca the philosopher.⁶ Book One of his *De Re Rustica* deals with general points such as the site of the farm, its buildings and staff; Book Two with agriculture proper; Books Three to Five with the culture of vines, olives, and fruit trees in general; Books Six to Nine with live stock (many details being given as to the treatment of sick animals); Book Ten, which is written in hexameters, with gardening; Book Eleven with the duties of the *uilicus* or farm-bailiff and gardening again—this time in prose; Book Twelve with the duties of the bailiff's wife (*uilica*), which are

¹ §§ 163, 160.

² See pp. 277, 278.

³ Colum. 9. 2. 1.

⁴ See p. 281³.

⁵ 8. 16. 9 *in nostro Gadum municipio*.

⁶ 3. 3. 3 (*regio*) *quam possidet Seneca uir excellentis ingenii atque doctrinae*. Comparison with Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 14. 49-51 makes it fairly certain that the estate to which Columella alludes did not pass into Seneca's hands very long before his death.

represented mainly by a collection of recipes for pickling and preserving and the making of pitch and certain kinds of oil and wine. The MSS. also present us with a treatise on trees (*De Arboribus*), handling, in a space considerably smaller than that of an average book of the other work, the subject matter of its third, fourth, and fifth books, but containing much that these do not contain and apparently composed before them. The reference in the first sentence to 'Book One on Agriculture' suggests that it followed a volume which covered in the same way Books One and Two of the larger work: there were, perhaps, other such volumes representing its later books.

Columella is a specialist, and proud of his calling. He thrills with satisfaction to think that folk will pay twice the ordinary price for quicksets of his growing, that he has discovered how to bore a hole in a tree without leaving behind the sawdust that hinders effective grafting, that his improved gauge frustrates the ditcher's artful attempts to make his trench seem deeper than it is.¹ He is a practical man, likes to tell us how many working days an operation requires, does not expect any one to listen to rules for vine culture till he has been convinced that vine culture can be profitable.² No detail seems petty to him, as he warns us to build off the high road, because of the depredations of passers-by and the cost of entertaining every one who chooses to break his journey at your place,³ notes that dogs' names must not be very long, nor yet shorter than two syllables,⁴ describes a fowlhouse with all the care, and none of the clumsiness, of Vitruvius.⁵ And

¹ 3. 3. 13, 4. 29. 15, 3. 13. 11 *sqq.*

² 2. 12 (13) *passim*, 3. 3. 1.

⁴ 7. 12. 13.

³ 1. 5. 7.

⁵ 8. 3.

yet he is exempt from that common failing of the practical man, contempt for the past history of his calling. It is from Columella, not Varro, that we get most of our knowledge of the Carthaginian Mago's hand-book, which a pedantic senate, alarmed at the decay of Roman farming, had translated and circulated in Italy, regardless, as educational authorities will be, of the fact that the precious flower of one soil may be the rank weed of another.¹ Cato and Varro are often quoted, the latter less often than he is used; a good many other authorities are mentioned several times. Columella meets his predecessors on equal terms, often refuting the views of individuals, sometimes an almost absolute consensus.² The ridiculous medicine of the day, however, finds him a willing dupe, and he is quite convinced that the sick cow is relieved by having a circle scratched in its ear and lungwort inserted in a hole pricked at the centre, and that the sight of water-fowl will cure its colic.³ Worse still—for one is familiar with the fact that the most practical minds are not always proof against superstition—nothing can be more careless than the calendar of Book Eleven, where the statements as to the movements of the stars, by which important operations are to be timed, are infinitely worse than useless. The farmers seem to have known as little of Caesar's labours in this field as the poets recked: their almanacs repeat without demur whatever they find in their authorities, works of a similar kind, but compiled for use in the most different latitudes. And so Columella, to take a single instance, gives three distinct dates for the morning rising of

¹ Plin. *Nat. Hist.* 18. 22. In 17. 128 this usually unscientific writer shows that he realizes some of the drawbacks involved.

² See 3. 5. 1, 7. 2.

³ 6. 5. 3, 4 and 7. 1.

Lyra, two of which are as wide apart as 15th May and 3rd November, whilst none of them coincides with any rising that can have occurred in his time at either Rome or Alexandria.¹

It is only in accordance with Columella's practical standpoint that his vocabulary should abound with words that are rare, or not found at all, in other literature,² though doubtless common enough in agricultural parlance. Some striking instances occur in the passages that deal with the duties of the *vilica*: Columella emphasizes the fact that in the good old days these were discharged by the farmer's wife,³ and it may be that he has preserved to us the terminology of the recipe-books of some notable housewife. Apart from this feature, however, his style is the refined and graceful style of Silver Latin, without, however, any of its affectation and extravagance. Fine writing there is none, save for the outburst in which he develops the aesthetic aspect of the practical rule requiring that vines should be arranged according to their kinds:

The least disposed to country life, should he come into a vineyard thus arranged at the proper season, must feel a keen satisfaction in appreciating the bountifulness of Nature. On the one side he will see Bituric vines with their wealth of fruit, on the other their rivals of the whiter kind; here Arcelacians, and there, to match them, Spionians or Basilicans—so that it seems as though our foster-mother Earth, glad at the coming of her annual task, like one that is never done with child-bearing, offers to man her drooping breasts that swell with the new wine. And the young sprays, by grace of Bacchus, alike those of the white vine and the golden-red and that which hath a purple sheen,

¹ II. 2. 40, 43, 84.

² So, e.g., *abnodare*, *canteriatu*, *decacuminare*, *fenestella*, *glocire*, *impedatio*, *pullulus* (adj.), *scabratus*, *semiuietus*.
pr. 8.

teem with juice, so that everywhere the brimming autumn is a blaze of many-hued fruit.¹

As a specimen of his ordinary style we may take his instructions for discovering a swarm of bees, without, however, guaranteeing the efficiency of the method prescribed. You must first watch a spring in some district obviously suited to their activities: if it is visited by many insects, there are hopes of procuring a swarm:

and the way to do so is this. Find out how far away they are, to which end you must provide ruddle and smear it on a stick, and touch therewith the back of every bee that sips. Now wait, and you will have no difficulty in recognizing any that come a second time. If they do this soon, be sure they are stationed near; otherwise, you must gauge the distance by the time they take in getting back. . . . Those you find travelling farther will need more elaborate treatment. A piece of reed is cut having a knot at each end, a hole is bored in the side of it and a little honey or boiled wine poured in: it is then set down by the water. After a number of bees have crawled inside, attracted by the smell of the sweet fluid, it is picked up, one, and one only, of the occupants allowed to escape, and the aperture closed with the thumb. The fugitive serves as guide to the searcher, who follows him as long as he can, and, on losing sight of him, releases another bee. Should this go the same way, he keeps on; if not, he lets bee after bee escape, observes the direction taken by the majority, and follows these until they bring him to the place where the swarm is concealed. . . . Should it have made its home in a hollow tree . . . then, if the tree is not too thick, a saw is taken that is quite sharp (so that the process may be shorter), and first the upper part, which contains no bees, and then as much of the rest as they have occupied is cut off, the section is wrapped up in a clean cloth (a point of vital importance), any cracks there may be are sealed up, and it is carried off to the place where it is to stand.²

¹ 3. 21. 3.

² 9. 8. 8 *sqq.*

Columella makes frequent and happy quotations from the *Georgics*, and writes his tenth book in hexameters because Virgil has broken off his description of the old Corycian's garden at Tarentum with the suggestion that others may develop this theme.¹ But our author is no poet, and this book no *Georgic*. On the solitary occasion when he seems about to soar a little—on wings that obviously owe much to Virgil—he soon tires, fancies he hears a shocked Muse protesting and reminding him of the 'cramped circle' and 'thin thread' in which he is wont to work,² and descends. In particular, the dullness and monotony of the lists of flowers and plants remind one of Tilburina's catalogues in *The Critic*.

Columella is used by Pliny³ and divers agricultural and veterinary writers of the fourth century,⁴ Palladius often simply transcribes him. Cassiodorus recommends him to his monks as helpful in farm and garden,⁵ Isidore knows him,⁶ and MSS. seem to have been fairly common in Charlemagne's time: Walafrid Strabo, abbot of Reichenau, borrows from Book Ten in his own horticultural poem.⁷ Boccaccio knows and cites Columella.⁸ In our own literature, Elyot mentions him as an authority on bee republics, Milton prescribes his book in the *On Education*, and Cowley's *On Gardening* contains several allusions to it.

¹ See his remarks in the preface to Book Ten.

² See ll. 215-227.

³ He is cited nine times in the text, and appears in the indices of seven books.

⁴ Pelagonius (who often cites him), Eumelus (an author quoted by Absyrtus in the time of Constantine), Vegetius, *De Mulomedicina* 4. 2.

⁵ *Inst. Div. Lect.* 28.

⁶ *Orig.* 17. 1. 1.

⁷ See Manitius, *Gesch. der lat. Lit. des Mittelalters*, p. 309.

⁸ Nollac, *Pétrarque et l'humanisme*, ii. p. 100³.

3. GEOGRAPHY

Pomponius Mela, of Tingentera¹ in Spain, is the author of a geographical work entitled *De Chorographia*, written upon the plan which ancient geographers affected and to which the work of Scylax, the earliest of professedly geographical writers, owes its name—that of the *Periplus* (coasting-voyage). The emperor whom he describes as ‘opening the long-sealed land of Britain’² must be Claudius, and he doubtless wrote somewhere about the year A.D. 44.

After some general remarks upon the earth’s zones, seas, and continents, we start³ from Gibraltar along the southern coast of the Mediterranean, and arrive by way of Syria and Asia Minor at the Dardanelles,⁴ passing through which we follow the starboard coast round to the Don and ascend it until stopped by the imaginary range of the Rhipaeæan Mountains.⁵ In Book Two we come back to the mouth of the Don, turn west, and regain our starting-point.⁶ A catalogue of the islands of all the seas so far traversed concludes the book. In the next we sail out into Ocean, and, again keeping the land to starboard, cruise past Spain, Gaul, Germany, and Sarmatia. At the Caspian Sea, to Mela, as to most writers since Alexander’s time, an inlet of Ocean, we pause to review the islands of the section,⁷ and then sail on past Scythians and Seres to

¹ Mel. 2. 96 *unde nos sumus, Tingentera*.

² 3. 49. *tam diu clausam (Britanniam) aperit ecce principum maximus*.

³ I. 24. 25.

⁴ I. 96.

⁵ I. 117.

⁶ 2. 96.

⁷ The Caspian is reached at § 38, but several sections are then devoted to a description of the Araxes and the Hyrcanian tiger, and to the story of certain Indians whom a storm drove along the waters of the Northern Ocean to the coast of Germany. The islands begin at § 46 and the voyage is resumed at § 59.

India and the Rea Sea, and so along the southern shores of a much abbreviated Africa back to Gibraltar. In this section the islands are noticed as they would naturally meet the traveller's eyes.

Mela's opening remark as to the difficulty of giving his subject literary treatment is mere affectation.¹ He is a rhetorician, and intends to write a rhetorical geography, and he possesses all the qualities which are required for the successful execution of his plan. His narrative runs smoothly and rapidly along, pausing only to dwell on some piquant custom, picturesque scene, or ancient relic, content otherwise to make each name as it comes lemma for a brief note that will pleasantly stimulate our recollection of history or mythology, or, conversely, by sheer vigour or neatness imprint some fact upon our memories. A very representative extract is the following :

Next comes Ionia, indented by several windings of the coast. It makes its first bend at the promontory of Posideum, embracing in it the oracle of Apollo (Branchides, of yore, but now Didymean), Miletus, once chief city of all Ionia in the sciences of peace and war, birthplace of the astronomer Thales, Timotheus the musician, and Anaximander the philosopher, and other citizens *whose glorious intellects give her just claim to glory* (say what they will against Ionia), the city of Hippis, the mouth of the Maeander, and Mount Latmos, noted for the legend of the moon's passion for Endymion.²

The words italicized illustrate Mela's use of word-play : all the rhetorical tricks will be found within the space of a few pages of his book. Neat transitions, such as abound in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, were much

¹ I. I *impeditum opus et facundiae minime capax : constat enim fere gentium locorumque nominibus, etc.*

² I. 86.

admired in the schools, and he was doubtless very proud of the one by which he passes from the tour of the Mediterranean to the consideration of its islands: 'As we leave the straits there faces us the island of Gades, suggesting the enumeration of the others.'¹ Lucan must have admired the exaggeration of an account that makes Ireland so emerald that its cattle burst if left too long grazing.² Fairly numerous echoes of Sallust³ suggest that Mela regarded him as his literary model. Mela's style then leaves nothing to be desired from the point of view of his century. To its geographical knowledge, moderate though it certainly was, he has done but scant justice. The point is not one which can be developed here, but it may be noted that he makes the Danube flow into the Adriatic⁴ and Germany extend to the Alps,⁵ ignores the division of Mauretania into two provinces,⁶ and repeats the wildest stories of Herodotus and others in regard to Scythia, India, and Aethiopia.⁷ However, he has paid some attention to his own country and the adjacent Gaul, has a good idea of the sweep of the latter's coast that culminates at Ushant,⁸ and mentions, alone among ancient writers, the Isle of Sena (*Sein* off Finisterre).⁹ He knows something indeed of waters yet further north,

¹ 2. 97.

² 3. 53 *adeo luxuriosa herbis . . . ut se exigua parte diei pecora impleant, et nisi pabulo prohibeantur diutius pasta dissiliant.*

³ So, e.g., 2. 92 *Saguntum fide atque aerumnis incluta* = Sall. *Hist.* 2. 21 *D. Saguntini fide atque aerumnis incluti*: see further Frick's edition, pp. v, vi.

⁴ 2. 57.

⁵ 3. 25.

⁶ Though he has occasion to deal with the district in two parts of his book (1. 25, 3. 105). The division was effected in A.D. 42 (Dio 50. 9).

⁷ 2. 9 *sqq.*; 3. 61 *sqq.*, 85 *sqq.*

⁸ 3. 16 *ora primo nihil progressa in altum mox tantumdem paene in pelagus excedens quantum retro Hispania abscesserat, Cantabricis fit aduersa terris et grandi circuitu adflexa ad occidentem litus aduertit.*

⁹ 3. 48.

being the first to name the Orkneys¹ (*Orcades*), whilst his island-studded Codanian Bay, beyond the Elbe, is clearly the Baltic, and its largest island, Codanovia, the southern promontory of Sweden.² There is a redeeming point even about his misconception of the Caspian; at least his long, narrow, *river-like* entrance³ implies some advance towards the knowledge of the Volga which is first definite in Ptolemy. Whence all this special lore has come is a matter of guess-work: the theory of a single source is not so impossible for a writer of Mela's type as it is for a Petronius or a Tacitus. Directly or indirectly, Varro seems to have had considerable influence upon his work.

Mela was one of the elder Pliny's authorities,⁴ and was used in the third century (without acknowledgment) by Solinus,⁵ in the ninth by the anonymous author of the geographical work generally known as the *De Situ Orbis*.⁶ His book is not one of the stock possessions of the Middle Ages, though Pastrengo knows it in the fourteenth century and Petrarch cites it fairly often. It is one of the manuals recommended to Hartlib by Milton, and even in Johnson's time enjoyed credit enough for the dictator to carry it with him on a coach drive to Harwich. The suggestion hazarded by a friend of Goethe's that it was the work of Boccaccio⁷ was, of course, absurd: the book is as clearly Silver as the *Rape of the Lock* is Queen Anne.

¹ 3. 54.

² 3. 31 and 54.

³ 3. 38 *mare Caspium ut angusto ita longo etiam freto primum terras quasi fluvius inrumpit.*

⁴ He is named in the indices to Books 3-6, 8, 12, 13, 21, 22, but never cited in the text.

⁵ See Mommsen's edition, p. 249.

⁶ Manitius, *Gesch. der lat. Lit. des Mittelalters*, p. 675.

⁷ Hortis, *La Corografia di Pomponio Mela*, etc. in *Archeografo Triestino*, 1879.

Seneca the philosopher wrote an account of India and described the geography and religious customs of Egypt. The former work was used by Pliny for the corresponding sections of his sixth book,¹ and Servius mentions both : ² neither, however, has reached us.

Gaius Licinius Mucianus, who helped Vespasian to attain the purple, is often cited by Pliny for *notabilia*, chiefly of geographical import. He had seen much of the East : perhaps he published a journal of his travels. The fragments suggest a work as unscientific as Mela's. In a Lycian temple Mucianus saw a letter written home from the front by Homer's Sarpedon ; at Rhodes he touched a cuirass that had belonged to Amasis, and was by this time reduced, under the hands of inquisitive generations, to the merest rags—after which his assertion that the Pomptine marshes covered the site of twenty-four ancient cities, leaves the imagination of his readers cold.³

Pliny himself, after considering in the second book of his *Natural History* a number of matters of geographical interest, supplies us in the next four books with a detailed treatment of the various countries, following, like Mela, the *Periplus* principle, and starting, like him, from Gibraltar, but taking more cognizance of the inland regions. Reaching the Rhipaeans ⁴ by the left-hand shores of the Mediterranean and the other inland seas, he passes over them into the ocean and so coasts back westward to his starting-point. All this has taken two books : in the others we follow the right-hand route of Mela's first book, cross the Rhipaeans again,⁵ turn this time eastward, and follow the Ocean

¹ Pliny cites Seneca at § 60 and names him in the index.

² On *Aen.* 9. 30, 6. 154.

³ *Nat. Hist.* 13. 88, 19. 12, 3. 59.

⁴ 4. 94.

⁵ 6. 33.

coast back to Gibraltar. Pliny takes the islands in groups, but his groups come more frequently than Mela's, those of Southern Europe, for instance, being four in number.¹ His account of Europe is, for the most part, uninteresting and unintelligent : perhaps no part of the *Natural History* shows more clearly the defects of which I shall speak more fully in the next section. The mention of Scandinavia (the largest island of the Codanian Bay, and reckoned by the natives as worthy to rank as 'another continent'), of thirty Haebudes, of Mona and Monapia (whereas Caesar's Mona seems to do duty for both Anglesey and Man), of Vectis (situate, however, between England and Ireland)²—a few points of enlightenment like these cannot blind us to the fact that the accounts of Germany and Britain, one the scene of long wars of which he himself had written a history, the other certainly no longer an *ultima Thule*, are desperately meagre. Asia and Africa fare better. The Tigris and Euphrates are fully described,³ a greatly advanced knowledge of India is displayed,⁴ and valuable information is given as to the discoveries by which successive navigators had made the voyage to that country safer and shorter.⁵ For the other continent our author has been able to draw on the geographical writings of the scholarly prince Juba of Mauretania,⁶ and his accounts of the expeditions of Cornelius Balbus against the Garamantes⁷ and of Suetonius Paulinus across Mount Atlas are attractive.⁸

¹ 3. 76 *sqq.* ; 151, 152 ; 4. 52 *sqq.* ; 92, 93.

² 4. 96, 103.

³ 5. 83 *sqq.*, 6. 127 *sqq.*

⁴ 6. 56 *sqq.*

⁵ 6. 96-106.

⁶ See especially his accounts of the Nile (5. 51 *sqq.*) and the Fortunate Isles (6. 203-205).

⁷ 5. 36 *sqq.*

⁸ 5. 14 and 15.

But of Africa's great southward sweep he has no suspicion.¹

Pliny's geographical books form the basis of Solinus' notorious compilation of marvels, and furnished men like Bede and Paulus Diaconus² with much of the cognate information which they introduce into their historical works. A little treatise on geography written about A.D. 825 by the Irish monk Dicuil draws mainly upon this source.³

A real advance, from both literary and scientific points of view, is manifested by the *Germania* of Tacitus. If it was the geographical excursus of Sallust that inspired the chapters upon Britain which this writer inserted into his *Agricola*, these in their turn may well have suggested to him the composition of a purely geographical treatise. Once he had decided to confine himself to a particular country, he cannot have taken long to decide which that country should be. The German cloud in Rome's political sky was by his time considerably larger than a man's hand. In Nero's days only the eye of a statesman like Seneca could discern it.⁴ Then, at Nero's death, had come the great mutiny of German auxiliaries that had left humiliating stains on the honour of the legions.⁵ Twenty years later nothing but the sudden break-up of the river ice had prevented a German contingent from taking part in the rebellion of Saturninus.⁶ And now,

¹ Accepting without comment (6. 175) Juba's statement that the Atlantic begins at the *promuntorium Mossylicum*, some way short of Guardafui!

² Manitius, l.c., pp. 77 sqq., 269.

³ Bunbury, *Hist. of Ancient Geography*, ii. 701. My debt to Mr. Bunbury in this section is very great.

⁴ *De Ira* i. 11. 3 sqq., esp. § 4 *agedum, illis corporibus illis animis delicias, luxum, opes ignorantibus da rationem, da disciplinam: ut nil amplius dicam, necesse erit certe nobis mores Romanos repetere.*

⁵ Tac. *Hist.* 4. 12 sqq.

⁶ Suet. *Dom.* 6.

as Tacitus completed his *Agricola*, the new emperor was detained on the Rhine, loth to miss the opportunities offered by the civil strife with which this dangerous enemy was at present troubled.¹ To suppose that because Tacitus, without entirely ignoring the weaknesses of the German character,² does unmistakably emphasize the contrast between the simple virtues of a savage people and the civilized corruptions of contemporary Rome—to suppose on this account that he was strongly influenced by the desire to improve the morals of his countrymen would be to misunderstand the conditions under which he was writing. The belief in the survival of golden-age innocence in remote regions of the earth to which luxury and refinement have not yet penetrated is as old as Homer and Pindar. Rhetorical history and Cynic diatribe in due course identified the Abii and Hyperboreans of these writers with the Scythians, whose spokesman, Anacharsis, criticizes Greek culture so frankly in Lucian's entertaining satire, the prototype of the *Lettres Persanes* and the *Citizen of the World*. And this Utopian tendency seems by the time with which this book is concerned to have become a convention of geographical description that had any literary ambition at all. Mela, Curtius, and Pliny are full of it.³ No doubt Tacitus could have as easily dispensed with the use of epigram and point as with his thrusts at the passion for silver plate, the practice of the arts of seduction, the cultivation of the rich and childless man.

The MSS. do not agree as regards the title of our work. The fullest form of it reads *On the Origin*,

¹ Bury, *History of the Roman Empire*, p. 418.

² See II. 3, 15. 1, 22. 2, 23. 2.

³ Cp. J. H. Sleeman's edition of the *Germania*, Intr. p. xxvii.

Geography, Institutions, and Tribes of the Germans, but important MSS. are content with the first and second, or the first and third, of these four items. The book falls into two parts, of which the first is of a general character, dealing in twenty-eight chapters with geographical features, origins, and institutions (public and private). Then in eighteen chapters, Tacitus enumerates the various tribes, mentioning any notable characteristic they exhibit or some point of interest connected with them—the intelligence of the Chatti,¹ the righteousness of the Chauci,² the pacifism which has proved the ruin of the Cherusci (for, he notes,

When you live amidst the lawless and the strong, it is vanity to think of peace ; where might decides, moderation and goodness are words reserved for the parties that are most powerful. The Cherusci used to be called just and virtuous, but nowadays they are called foolish and feeble, whilst to their victors, the Chatti, good fortune is accounted for statesmanship³),

the worship of Nerthus, whom our author identifies with Mother Earth, by the Angli,⁴ the Scandinavian boats, built to row either way with equal ease.⁵ We start with the peoples lying on or about the Rhine, proceeding thence along the northern coast (with a detour inland to the Cherusci) as far as the Cimbri of Jutland. After a digression on the trouble which this tribe at the outset and afterwards the Germans as a whole have given to the Romans,⁶ we are introduced to the great Suebian race with its numerous tribes.⁷ After naming several of these, with hardly a hint as to the position they occupy, Tacitus undertakes to follow the line of the Danube,⁸ along which he moves from

¹ 30. 2.² 35. 2, 3.³ 36. 1, 2.⁴ 40. 2.⁵ 44. 2.⁶ Chap. 37.⁷ 38. 1.⁸ 41. 1.

west to east until he reaches a point not very far distant from the great bend above Budapest. 'Such,' he observes, 'one may say is Germany's frontier so far as the Danube is one of its boundaries,'¹ and goes on to speak of tribes that lie 'behind' those just mentioned, inhabiting mainly defiles and ridges of a continuous range by which Suebia is divided into two parts, the *Riesengebirge* of to-day.² Beyond this again lie many peoples, among them the Gotones, or later Goths.³ 'On the Ocean itself' are the Suiones,⁴ whose name is probably involved in that of Sweden, and beyond whom lies 'another sea, sluggish and almost waveless,'⁵ the sea which he has described in the *Agricola* as extending between Britain and the Shetlands, and for which Pytheas of Marseilles seems to have been the main authority, claiming, indeed, whatever else he reported only from hearsay, to have seen this with his own eyes, a substance that was neither land, nor water, nor air, but a medley of all three, which he likens to the 'sea-lung,' a mollusc of the jelly-fish order. And with this sea Tacitus thinks we may well believe earth to end, since

here the last gleams of the setting sun linger on until dawn, with such brilliance that the stars are dimmed, and indeed popular belief has it that the sound of his issuing forth can be heard, the outlines of his steeds and his halo of rays seen.⁶

He turns off along the coast of the Suevic Sea or Baltic, and gives us an account of the amber that is gathered there, an account that illustrates well the way in which geography and cynic satire are blended in his pages :

¹ 42. *I eaque Germaniae uelut frons est, quatenus Danuuio praecingitur.*

² 43. 1-3.

³ 44. 1.

⁴ 44. 2.

⁵ 45. *I pigrum ac prope immotum.*

⁶ 45. 1.

They also ransack the sea, the only people in the world to gather amber, or *glesum* as they call it, finding it in shallow water or on the beach itself. What it is, or what the cause producing it, this these barbarians have never learned or tried to learn : for long, indeed, it lay unheeded along with the other refuse that the sea casts up, till our daintiness brought it renown. They themselves make no use of it : they take it as they find it and sell the shapeless mass, marvelling to get money for it. One can, however, see that it is the sap of trees : it often contains creeping, even winged, things that have got caught in it when it was fluid, and then, as it hardened, been imprisoned. I suppose that just as the remote regions of the East have those more fertile groves and woods that distil frankincense and balm, so in the isles and mainland of the West there are substances on which the rays of the sun, here not remote, so act that they become liquid and flow into the adjacent sea, washing up under stress of storms upon the opposite shore. If you try the experiment of setting a light to it, it flares up like a torch, producing an oily, fragrant flame and then turning soft and pliable as pitch or resin.¹

Another Suebian tribe is mentioned, and then a last chapter describes three peoples whom Tacitus regards as perhaps Sarmatian rather than German ; one of them is the Fenni or Finns.² The work concludes with the refusal to speak of lands remoter still, the domain of the unknown and fabulous.³

Tacitus nowhere implies that he has seen Germany, and the only authority he cites (this but once) is Caesar.⁴ Livy in his hundred and fourth book prefaced his narrative of the war with Ariovistus by an account of the ' geography and institutions ' of Germany,⁵ which is not likely to have been entirely ignored by his successor. In view of the latter's admiration for Sallust one might suspect him of having drawn on that author's

¹ 45. 4-8.² 46. 1.³ 46. 6.⁴ 28. 1.⁵ *Perioch.* 104 *prima pars libri situm Germaniae moresque continet.*

favourite model Posidonius, but Strabo's account of the country makes it almost certain that the famous philosopher-geographer's knowledge of it was very meagre. No doubt Tacitus gleaned something from Roman officers who had served on the Rhine : Germans themselves, too, were not infrequent visitors to Rome.

Of the early fortunes of the *Germania* something was said in Chapter VII. Enoch's MS. seems to have come eventually into the hands of Aeneas Silvius, who was afterwards Pope Pius II. and used the work in his writings. As it had been discovered in a German convent, so it was at Nuremberg that the first separate edition appeared, in 1473, and to German humanists that it most appealed. Celtis lectured upon it; Aventinus, the historian of Bavaria, based on one of its sentences a theory of ' lays of ancient Germany ' which he developed with an enthusiasm surprising in one who despised the epics of the Minnesänger; the Alsatian Rhenanus, the first of our author's great editors, initiated the critical study of the picture of old German civilization which it presents. The days are far away when men could speak of it in Gibbon's words as the result of ' accurate observation and diligent inquiries,' but between this point of view and Mommsen's contempt the middle way may bring us near the truth.

4. THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF PLINY

Gaius Plinius Secundus, born at Comum, A.D. 23/24,¹ in an equestrian family,² served as an officer in Ger-

¹ The MSS. preserve some mutilated remains of the biography which stood in the *De Viris Illustribus* of Suetonius. That his death (Aug. 24, A.D. 79) occurred in his fifty-sixth year we learn from his nephew (*Ep.* 3. 5. 7).

² This appears from the character of the appointments which he held.

many,¹ held important financial posts in the provinces, and enjoyed the friendship of Vespasian.² When the eruption of Vesuvius took place in A.D. 79, he was admiral of the fleet stationed in the Bay of Naples, and landed at Stabiae to observe the phenomenon, but died on the second day, suffocated, it would seem, by the clouds of vapour and sand.³ Of his biographical, rhetorical, grammatical, and historical output I have already spoken, and turn now to his⁴ last work, the *Natural History*.

The preface, addressed to Prince Titus in A.D. 77,⁵ boasts of the 'twenty thousand things worth knowing'⁶ which the book contains, the fruits, no doubt, of the hundred and sixty note-books, full of microscopic writing, which his nephew assures us Pliny left behind him at his death.⁷ Book One consists only of the indices for the succeeding books, Book Two takes a physical survey of the Universe, Books Three to Six handle Geography, Book Seven Anthropology and Physiology, Books Eight to Eleven Zoology, Books Twelve to Nineteen Botany.⁸ Then thirteen books are concerned with the medicinal uses of plants and animals,⁹ though the description of garden flowers and herbs that occupies half Book Twenty-One is purely botanical. Books Thirty-Three to Thirty-Seven describe

¹ Plin. *Ep.* 3. 5. 4.

² L.c. § 9.

³ The whole occurrence is described in detail by Pliny the younger, *Ep.* 6. 16.

⁴ It comes last in his nephew's list, *Ep.* 3. 5. 6.

⁵ § 3 *triumphalis et censorius tu (Titus) sexiensusque consul* (=A.D. 77).

⁶ § 17 (quoted on p. 303).

⁷ *Ep.* 3. 5. 17 *electorum commentarios centum sexaginta, opisthographos quidem et minutissime scriptos*.

⁸ Books Seventeen to Nineteen are concerned with Agriculture.

⁹ Plants in Books Twenty to Twenty-Seven, animals in Books Twenty-Eight to Thirty-Two.

metals, minerals, stones and gems, the medicinal lore here following immediately upon the account given of each detail.

Such a summary as this can give no adequate conception of a work which Gibbon aptly describes as 'that immense register where Pliny has deposited the discoveries, the arts, and the errors of mankind.'¹ Under the headings *Bronze*, *Earth*, *Stone* we run across histories of sculpture and painting;² *Gold* leads to a long account of the status and privilege of the equestrian order of nobility, which wore gold rings;³ *Chalk*, being used to whiten the feet of slaves in the auction room, suggests an excursus on the influence of freedmen.⁴ This discursiveness is the secret at once of Pliny's failure as a scientist and his charm as a mere writer. Book Ten is about birds, but contains a dissertation on propagation in general, started by the reflection that serpents, as well as birds, lay eggs.⁵ In Book Twelve, on foreign trees, Herodotus is cited as witness for a tribute of ebony paid by the Ethiopians to Persia. But our author, observing that Herodotus says that they sent gold and ivory as well, proceeds to take the bit in his teeth:

Yes, twenty large elephant's tusks he says they paid. That shows how much they valued ivory in the three hundred and tenth year of the city, for it was then that the historian wrote at Thurii, which makes it all the stranger that we believe him when he assures us that he had never met any one who had seen the Po.⁶

And we flounder on as best we can, until the re-appearance of the word *ebony*⁷ warns us that our

¹ *Decline and Fall*, chap. 13.

² Plastic art is handled in 34. 37-93, 35. 151-157, 36. 9-43, painting in 35. 15-150.

³ 33. 29-36.

⁶ L.c. §§ 17, 18.

⁴ 35. 199-201.

⁵ §§ 169, 170 *sqq.*

⁷ § 19.

travels are over for the time being. For scientific classification, a matter in which Aristotle and Theophrastus had done something, an author like this naturally cares little. His list of birds starts with the largest. Presently we are introduced to Aristotle's division into birds with curved talons, birds with toes, birds with webbed feet.¹ This lasts some time, though we are never told to which of the new categories the big birds with which we began belong. And of web-footed ones only the halcyons get mention, for the consideration of their famous nests² sets Pliny thinking first of nests in general, then of the various powers of winged creatures in general, and he begins to catalogue by the corresponding heads of conjugal fidelity, power of flight, and so on.³ The fact is, our author read too much, in his carriage and over his meals, note-book in hand, making memoranda all the time.⁴ He says himself that his encyclopaedia is the outcome of some two thousand books, and although he implies that in the main he has relied on a hundred 'select authors,'⁵ over four hundred names figure in the source lists which he appends to the index of each book. That many of these writers were known to him only, or chiefly, through quotations in his main sources is fairly certain. One very damning piece of evidence may be mentioned here. Ordinarily speaking, he contents himself with the simple name of his authority, but in a passage of

¹ Cp. 10. §§ 1 and 29.

² § 90.

³ It is interesting to observe the gradual transition in §§ 99-104.

⁴ Plin. *Ep.* 3. 5. 11 *super hanc (cenam) liber legebatur, adnotabatur, in itinere quasi solutus ceteris curis, huic uni (= studiis) uacabat: ad latus notarius cum libro et pugillaribus . . . qua ex causa Romae quoque sella uehebatur.*

⁵ *Nat. Hist.* pr. 17 *uiginti milia rerum dignarum cura . . . lectione uoluminum circiter duum milium . . . ex exquisitis auctoribus centum inclusimus triginta sex uoluminibus.*

Book Thirteen ¹ he suddenly begins to specify not only the particular work, but even the particular book of the work, from which he is quoting: 'Cassius Hemina in Book Four of his *Annals* . . . Piso in the first book of his *Commentaries*,' and so on, giving us in the space of some twenty-four lines five or six of these full references, and thereafter no more. Obviously he has been using a source in which the quotations were regularly made in this form, and has for once omitted to adjust those which he was borrowing to his own method. Of course this theory of knowledge only by second-hand quotation may be carried too far. We do not, for instance, need its help in order to explain the fact that some of Pliny's statements as to the views of men whose works have reached us are demonstrably inaccurate. Columella he must surely have actually read, yet he ascribes to him an invention for which that author himself distinctly gives the credit to an Egyptian writer.² The explanation in this and many other cases is surely to be looked for rather in that weakness of the human intellect which makes it so difficult to achieve absolute accuracy in an article that is the product of a number of scattered notes.

The younger Pliny tells us ³ that his uncle maintained that no book was so bad but that some part of it was useful, and the *Natural History* convicts him of having been devoid of all critical insight. He says once, à propos of some statements which he admits to be unreliable, 'they have been put forth in the past, and so I must put them forth now,' ⁴ and these words might serve as a motto for the whole work. Elsewhere he is

¹ § 84-87.² 19. 68 (=Col. 11. 3. 53).³ *Ep.* 3. 5. 10⁴ 2. 85 *incomperta haec et inextricabilia, sed prodenda quia sunt prodita.*

less candid, once even assures us that he takes no pleasure in proving himself painstaking in regard to matters of no importance.¹ His zoology is of course notorious, with its *cepus*, a beast with forefeet like a man's hand, but, alas! not seen at Rome since Pompey showed it, its hippopotamus that bleeds itself to cure obesity, its fox that puts an ear to the ice to guess its power to bear him, its fish that it takes a team of oxen to land.² The medical books are full of childish, superstitious remedies against which at least one of his authorities, the Roman Sextius Niger,³ seems to have raised a protest. It is a terrible thing to say of a learned man, but Pliny has most of the failings of the vulgar mind. He believes that the fact that Antony was the first Roman to drive a team of lions foreshadowed his future tyranny over a generous nation, that Nero's end was portended by a shifting of the earth's crust, which involved the interchange of positions, on either side of the highway, between an olive garden and a meadow.⁴ Curiosities of all kinds find ready attention from him. Celsus says that the use of vinegar as a remedy for snake-bites was accidentally discovered by a boy who, having been bitten and feeling thirsty, drank some for lack of anything better and was soon well. This is too tame for Pliny, who makes his victim get bitten whilst carrying a barrel of vinegar and discover that the pain gets worse each time he sets his burden down! ⁵ There is a touch of nature that makes this ponderous tome kin with the flimsiest articles of our modern magazines in the passages

¹ 17. 9 *diligentiam in superuacuis adfectare non nostrum est.*

² See 8. 70, 96, 103; 9. 44.

³ See Wellmann, *Xenocrates aus Aphrodisias* in *Hermes*, 1907, pp. 614 sqq. (on the evidence of *Nat. Hist.* 29. 76, 32. 26).

⁴ 8. 55, 2. 199.

⁵ 23. 56 (=Cels. 5. 27. 4).

that describe the eyes of various emperors or the affection of Tiberius for cucumbers and Livia for a brand of wine to which she believed her longevity was due, cite Antony's work *On My Own Drunkenness*, explain the political differences of a Drusus and a Caepio as the outcome of rivalry in an auction room.¹

Pliny's vocabulary is full, on the one hand, of plain, inornate, unliterary words, on the other, of those which before his time are found only in the poets. His general style shows a similar discrepancy. His Latinity is perhaps the worst that has reached us from any man with pretensions to culture before the fourth and fifth centuries. Almost all the rules that made Rome's language the clear and elegant vehicle of expression it was he habitually breaks, making, for instance, one genitive depend on another, using the ablative absolute to introduce a comment or correction (such as would nowadays be relegated to a footnote), or to add an entirely fresh point to a sentence already complete in itself, omitting some important word that must be evolved in a very forced manner from the preceding sentence, ending clauses with one that has no claim to a position of such distinction. But this slovenliness does not mean that Pliny is superior to the passion for fine writing. The cloven hoof of rhetoric keeps thrusting out in the most unexpected places, whilst several of the introductions to the books, and passages like the panegyric of Italy with which the work concludes, and the descriptions of the nightingale's song and the spider's web, proclaim themselves as purple patches.² Occasionally we catch the accents of some really eloquent source :

¹ II. 143, 144 ; 19. 64 ; 14. 59 ; 14. 147 ; 33. 20.

² 37. 201 *sqq.* ; 10. 81, 82 ; 11. 80 *sqq.*

And now I come to the earth, that part of the universe to which because of its surpassing services we have given the honourable title of mother. As Heaven belongs to God, so she to man, at birth receiving us, after birth feeding and maintaining us always, till at the end, when all the rest of Nature disowns us, she gathers us in her lap, then most of all a mother as she wraps us in our shroud. And for no service has she claim on our reverence more than for this, that she brings us reverence, by the monuments that she supports and the tombstones that give new lease to our names, and, in the face of the shortness of our span, make our memory endure. Hers is the power to which, last of all, we pray in our anger, that she fall heavy upon men that are no more—as though we knew not that she of all the elements alone is never angry with man. . . . Nay, it may be that even poison she has provided only in pity for us, to save them that are weary of life from dying the slow, wasting death of starvation (that beyond all others is at variance with her own generosity), the death of the precipice (that splinters the rent frame), the death of the strangling noose (a paradox indeed, that pens within the breath it hoped to expel). . . . Still, even had she borne it for our hurt, we could not well complain: for to her alone of all the elements do we prove ungrateful. What whim, what lust is there for which man makes her not his thrall? She is flung in the sea and dug out to admit the sea; water, iron, wood, fire, stone, grain—with all these is she tortured at all seasons, and this far more that she may minister to our luxuries than to our sustenance. And yet these wounds, suffered on the surface, the outer skin, might be counted enduring: we pierce to her vitals when we dig for veins of gold and silver, or sink copper and lead mines. . . . And she forgives, the more easily that all these roads to riches lead but to crime and murder and warfare, that with our own blood we bedew her and cover her with our unburied bones, over which, after all, she in the end doth spread herself, as though upbraiding our frenzy, and hides away even our evil deeds. I reckon it a count in our indictment as ingrates that we know not her nature.¹

¹ 2. 154-159.

The half-moralizing, half-sentimental tone of this extract is not uncommon in Pliny, and reminds one somewhat of Maeterlinck :

The vine should sometimes be loosed from its supporting elm and allowed to sprawl about at random, resting on the ground whereon, all the year, it has been gazing. Mules after a journey, dogs after a course, love a good roll, and the vine likewise is glad to stretch its legs.¹

Strange that from a tiny flax-seed should come that which carries the whole world to and fro, that it should grow on so slender a stalk, that rises not far out of the ground, and even this seed must be broken and beaten and forced to acquire the soft fleeciness of wool.²

Plants are grown so precious that they are nourished by pouring wine on the roots : we must needs teach even the trees to soak.³

Hardly less whimsical is the blunt, Catonian humour with which he rails against the Greeks (to whom he owes so much), especially their doctors :

This is the secret of the wordy battles fought around the sick-bed, each man suggesting something new for fear he be suspected of following some colleague's lead, the secret, too, of that melancholy epitaph, *Died of too many doctors*. . . . Our dangers afford them training, and they test their powers at our death-beds. Only the doctor may kill a man and escape punishment. Nay, the blame is shifted round and put on our own lack of self-control : 'tis actually those who die that are indicted.⁴

That the *Natural History* is not wholly devoid of interest, I hope these extracts may have given the reader reason to suspect. It also contains a mass of really valuable information. The respect with which Gibbon, in the passage quoted above, mentions it, and the readiness with which Mommsen in his chapters on

¹ 17. 209, 210.

³ 12. 8.

² 19. 5.

⁴ 29. 11 and 18.

public economy, faith and manners, and culture draws upon its stores, sufficiently attest the matter in a general way: two particular points may be mentioned here. No ancient writer sheds more light upon the industry and commerce of those days than does Pliny, with his descriptions of the way mines are worked, metals smelted, stuffs dyed, and paper manufactured,¹ his hints as to the adulteration of drugs and the means for detecting the same,² his wealth of notices bearing upon the most varied aspects of the subject—relations between employer and employé, for instance, are illuminated by the reference he makes to the clause in vine-dressers' contracts which guaranteed decent burial in case of a fatal fall from the supporting elm,³ whilst the economic doctrine, according to which 'the consumer pays the difference,' could hardly be better illustrated than it is by the humorous sketch he gives of the snowball growth of expenses about the frankincense of Arabia during its long journey to the sea: 'so it is that a pound of the best costs ten pieces,' he concludes.⁴ Of the other great debt we owe him, the preservation of much matter from books now lost, it is unnecessary to speak in detail. It was, no doubt, in one of these that he read the story of how King Porsena of Clusium had once been strong enough to forbid Rome the use of iron except for ploughshares,⁵ a story for which patriotic writers like Livy had long since substituted the glorious fables of the Scaevola and Cloelia, whose gallant deeds compel an admiring monarch to seek the friendship of their land.

¹ 33. 70 *sqq.*, 34. 94 *sqq.*, 9. 133 *sqq.*, 13. 68 *sqq.* ² Cp. e.g. 12. 76.

³ 14. 10 (*uites*) *in tantum sublimes ut vindemitor auctoratus rogum ac tumultum excipiat.* ⁴ 12. 63-65.

⁵ 34. 139. Of extant Roman writers Tacitus alone alludes to a surrender of the capital to Porsena (*Hist.* 3. 72).

Juvenal has, I think, occasional reminiscences of the *Natural History*; Gellius quotes it; in the third century Solinus and the poet of medicine, Sammonicus, use it;¹ in the fourth, Books Twenty to Thirty-Two were worked into a manual, *Pliny's Medicine*, as it is generally called, which had a great vogue. Fragments of fifth and sixth-century MSS. are still extant, and the use of the book by Isidore, Bede, and Alcuin² carries us on to the Middle Ages, when it becomes the scientific textbook of the day. Nevertheless, it is not one of the commonest possessions of the early Renaissance, though Petrarch had a copy and honours the author with a letter. Directly or indirectly, Maundeville draws on Pliny (well might the Pope tell him that he had a 'boke of Latin containing all that and mucche moore'), Rabelais often uses him, Elyot in the *Governour* sets him beside Aristotle and Theophrastus, the fantastic natural history of the Euphuists owes him much.³ Even after Montaigne has sounded a note of warning, and Bacon has classed our author with those whose writings are 'fraught with much fabulous matter,' Milton recommends him without reserve to Hartlib, and La Fontaine's *Pline le dit : il le faut croire*, ironically though it is said, no doubt represents the prevalent view of his day. Buffon was perhaps the last man of science to treat him with any respect. But the genial Sainte-Beuve, that warm admirer of the younger Pliny, found much to charm him in the work of the uncle, to which he pays eloquent tribute in one of his *Causeries*.⁴

¹ Sammonicus twice cites Pliny (ll. 53, 845).

² Manitius l.c. in index s.v. *Plinius der Aeltere*.

³ See the notes to Bond's edition of Lyly, whose *Campaspe* is based on *Nat. Hist.* 35. 86.

⁴ *Causeries du Lundi*, 22 Avril, 1850.

5. THE MANUALS OF FRONTINUS

Sextus Julius Frontinus, after being consul,¹ was governor of Britain from about A.D. 76 to A.D. 78,² became *curator* of the aqueducts in A.D. 97,³ was consul again in A.D. 98 and A.D. 100, and died, as we gather from a passage in the younger Pliny,⁴ who, like Martial, was a friend of his, somewhere about A.D. 104.

Frontinus tells us⁵ that he had made a habit of setting down in writing, for the use of his successors, a summary of the knowledge and experience which he had gained in the administration of an office. A work on *gromatica* (field-surveying), of which only excerpts remain, and another on military service, represented now only by its appendix, the *Strategemata*,⁶ were probably manuals of this sort: internal evidence shows them to have been written under Domitian.⁷ The *On Aqueducts*, which has reached us intact, was intended primarily as a book of reference for the author himself,

¹ See *Prosop. Imp. Rom.* 2, p. 192 for the dates of the consulships.

² Tac. *Agr.* 17.

³ *De Aquis*, 102.

⁴ Plin. *Ep.* 4. 8. 3 (the publication of the book is generally assigned to the beginning of A.D. 105). Martial addresses 10. 58 to him, and the language of Plin. l.c. and 5. 1. 5 suggests intimacy.

⁵ *De Aquis* praef. 2 *ea quae ad universam rem pertinentia contrahere potui, more iam per multa mihi officia servato in ordinem et uelut corpus diducta in hunc commentarium contuli . . . in aliis autem libris, quos post experimenta et usum composui, succedentium res acta est; huius commentarii pertinabit fortassis et ad successorem utilitas, sed cum inter initia administrationis meae scriptus sit imprimis ad nostram institutionem regulamque proficiet.*

⁶ That a theoretic treatise has preceded seems clear from the words of the preface: *cum ad instruendam rei militaris scientiam . . . accesserim eique destinato quantum cura nostra ualuit satisfacisse uisus sim, deberi adhuc institutae arbitror operae ut sollertia ducum facta . . . expeditis amplectar commentariis.*

⁷ For the *gromatic* work see p. 54 of Lachmann's edition in *Schriften der röm. Feldmesser*; the *Strategemata* presumes Domitian alive and in possession of the Germanicus title which he seems to have assumed in A.D. 84 (*Strat.* 2. 11. 7).

and was composed at the beginning of his charge,¹ under Nerva.

From any other point of view than that of subject matter, our author is certainly the most insignificant of all the prosaists with whom this book is concerned. And even the contents of the three books of the *Stratagemas* call for but brief notice. Book One contains stratagemas that may be needed before the battle, Book Two those to be used during or after the battle, Book Three those suitable for a siege. Each of the twelve to eighteen chapters that go to a book deals with a particular class of stratagem—'how to discover the enemy's plans,' 'how to divide his forces,' 'how to conceal disasters.'² Many examples come from Caesar, Sallust, and Livy, but foreign history is not ignored.

The treatise was known to the Greek Aelian,³ and had vogue enough for some one to imitate and use it in a collection of *Strategica* or *Deeds and Sayings of Generals* which appears in our MSS. as Book Four of the *Strategemata*. It has, however, a preface of its own, and, although in this preface and in the last paragraph of the *Strategemata* preface as it stands in our MSS., it is implied that both collections are by one and the same author, it is practically certain that Frontinus did not write the *Deeds and Sayings*, and that the passages which imply common authorship have been interpolated for the express purpose of fathering it upon him. John of Salisbury and most of the early Renaissance scholars know Frontinus, and Machiavelli in his treatise on the art of war draws most of his ancient lore from him—without acknowledgment.

¹ *De Aquis*, praef. 2. The reference to Nerva as deified (§ 118) points to its having been *published* later.

² 1. 2 and 8; 2. 7.

³ Ael. *De Ordin. Inst.* 1.

The book about the water supply is our main source of information on that interesting subject. After three chapters of preface, nineteen describe the history of the construction of each aqueduct, the ground from which it collects, its length, the height at which it reaches the city, its course within the city itself, and the quarters which it supplies. Then forty-one impossible chapters are concerned with the method of measuring and regulating supply by means of tubes of various diameters inserted in the walls of the reservoirs. With Chapter Sixty-Four the non-mathematical reader breathes freely again, and proceeds to learn how Frontinus, discovering that the official estimate of the total yield amounted to 1200 units less than he was bound to supply, set certain investigations on foot which revealed that there was in reality a large excess on the right side, the bulk of it represented by water which was being stolen in various ways, on which he enlarges with some feeling.¹ With Chapter Seventy-Seven dullness sets in once more, with statistics as to the quantity of water each aqueduct had to supply to the emperor, to private individuals, and to public institutions. At Chapter Eighty-Seven interest revives and is sustained to the end. Various reforms of Nerva's are recounted, such as the means taken to ensure that no district should depend on a single aqueduct and go dry when serious repairs had to be undertaken.² There follows a complete list of the author's predecessors in the curatorship,³ some account of the water-works staff and its duties,⁴ remarks upon the difficulty of keeping the aqueducts in proper condition,

¹ §§ 75, 76 : he recurs to the subject at § 112.

² § 87.

³ § 102.

⁴ §§ 100 *sqq.*, 116, 117.

and fairly full extracts from resolutions of the senate bearing upon the execution of repairs, encroachments upon the strip of land which was reserved on both sides of the channel, and the tapping of the aqueduct itself by those whose land it crossed.¹ The last chapter may be quoted as a fair example of the author's style at its best :

I admit that people who disregard a most important law deserve the penalty it prescribes, but they may have been misled by its having been so long in abeyance, and one must not be hard on them in that case. I accordingly did my best to prevent the publication of offenders' names. Indeed, some of them, whom the warning prompted to have recourse to the imperial bounty, may regard me as the cause of their having obtained a privilege. As regards the future, whilst I trust that occasion for enforcing the law will not arise, still that which duty demands must be done even if it involves making enemies.²

The treatise seems to have been little known in the Middle Ages, but there is every reason to believe that it was included in the monk of Hersfeld's promises, though not his deliveries, the discovery at Monte Cassino of the MS. which is still preserved there, and seems to be the ancestor of all others now existing, having been reserved for Poggio. Empty as it is alike of interesting anecdote and pithy maxim, it is rarely quoted by modern writers. Burton, however, mentions it in the *Anatomy*.³

To conclude a History of Literature with a chapter on technical writers is to achieve something of a climax, and I should like, before taking farewell of my reader, to recall to his mind some of the considerations which

¹ §§ 119 *sqq.*

² § 130.

³ 2. 2. 1. 1.

make our period worthy of serious study and real esteem. It did not, it is true, contribute to literature one of its very greatest figures. Of poetry in the highest sense it was almost barren. But for the pointed epigram and the invective satire of which Martial and Juvenal may be reckoned the inventors they are still the models, often copied, but never surpassed, whilst, in the domain which lies midway betwixt poetry and prose, Petronius has exhibited a power of characterization and realistic description, a taste in matters artistic and literary, a versatility of wit and humour, such as make the fact that he too is a pioneer seem but the least of his merits. In prose proper, we find yet again, in the younger Pliny, an inventor and perfect model of a new *genre*, the rhetorical epistle, as we may perhaps, for want of a better term, call it. The thoroughness of Quintilian, the breadth of his outlook, his critical acumen, command respect even from the severest critics of Rome's literary and educational ideals. As for Seneca and Tacitus, they are admittedly two of the greatest names in Roman literature. If, in our own times, the Philosopher has been compelled to yield the palm to the Historian, it is, I believe, mainly because too much influence is conceded to those human weaknesses of his, which stand out so clearly in the fierce light that beats upon his career: *bene qui latuit, bene vixit*. In style and thought I hold him the greater man. His Latin is always clear, its very mannerisms being prompted by the desire to gain point and emphasis. And the philosophy which he so earnestly preaches, practical and yet not materialistic, hopeful and yet free from sentimentality, is infinitely nobler than that of Tacitus.

Many centuries were to elapse before there would

316 SILVER AGE OF LATIN LITERATURE

be produced in the whole continent of Europe, within the compass of a hundred years, a body of writings comparable in diversity, originality, and excellence with the work which the Romans had produced in this the Silver Age of their literature.

NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS

The chief series are those of the *Loeb Library* (W. Heinemann, London; Putnam's Sons, New York); the *Bibliothèque latine publ. sous la dir. de Dés. Nisard* (F. Didot, Paris); the *Bibliothèque latine-française* of the *Collection Panckoucke* (Garnier, Paris), and Bohn's Library (Bell & Sons, London). In the case of the first three, the translation is accompanied by the Latin text; in the case of all, the translations of poets are in prose.

Calpurnius :

Puget (Nisard).

Celsus :

Des Étangs (Nisard); Friebois (Braunschweig).

Columella :

Nisard (Nisard).

Curtius :

Vaugelas (Nisard); Guérout (Panckoucke).

Frontinus :

Strategemata: (promised in *Loeb* series).

De Aquis: Rondelet (Nisard); Herschel, Boston; promised in *Loeb* series.

Juvenal and Persius :

Ramsay (Loeb).

Lucan :

Haureau (Nisard); (*in verse*) Ridley (Longmans, Green & Co., 1905); promised in *Loeb* series.

Martial :

Ker (Loeb: 2 vols., of which one has appeared and the second is announced for 1920).

The anonymous translation in Bohn's Library is interesting, as it contains many renderings and adaptations in verse, collected from various sources. See also *M. for English Readers*, W. T. Webb (Macmillan); *Selection from the Epigrams of M.*, W. J. Courthope (Murray).

Mela :

Huot (Nisard).

Persius :

Conington in his edition (Clar. Press): see also 'Juvenal.'

Petronius :

Heseltine (Loeb).

Phaedrus :

Fleutelot (Nisard); Pessonneaux (Panckoucke); Riley (Bohn).

318 SILVER AGE OF LATIN LITERATURE

Pliny the Elder :

Litré (Nisard) ; Bostock and Riley (Bohn) ; promised in *Loeb* series.

Pliny the Younger :

Hutchinson (Loeb : 2 vols., the *Letters* only, including those to and from Trajan).

Quintilian :

Baudet (Nisard) ; Charpentier (Panckoucke) ; Watson (Bohn) ; promised in *Loeb* series.

Scribonius :

Schonack (Fischer, Jena 1913).

Seneca the Elder :

Bornecque (Panckoucke).

Seneca the Younger :

Tragedies : F. J. Miller (Loeb).

Apotheosis : in the *Loeb* Petronius.

Nat. Quaest. : 'Physical Science,' Clark and Geikie (Macmillan, 1910).

Ep. Mor. : Gummere (Loeb : 3 vols., of which one, containing *Epp.* 1-65, has appeared) ; Pintrelle-La Fontaine (Nisard), Charpentier-Lemaistre (Panckoucke).

Other philosophical works : Regnault (Nisard) ; Charpentier-Lemaistre (Panckoucke) ; 'On Benefits,' Stewart (Bohn) ; 'Minor Essays and On Clemency,' Stewart (Bohn) ; 'Moral Essays' promised in *Loeb* series.

Silius :

Kermoyan (Nisard).

Statius :

Achilleis : Wartel (Nisard).

Thebais : Arnould (Nisard).

Silvae : Slater (Oxford Library of Translations).

Sulpicia :

In the Panckoucke translation of Juvenal and Persius.

Tacitus :

Annals and Histories : Church and Brodribb (Macmillan).

Agricola, Germania, Dialogus : Peterson - Hutton (Loeb) ;
Fyfe (Oxford Library of Translations).

Valerius Flaccus :

Nisard (Nisard) ; promised in *Loeb* series.

Valerius Maximus :

Baudement (Nisard) ; Charpentier (Panckoucke).

Velleius :

Gréard (Panckoucke) ; Watson (Bohn : with Sallust and Florus) ; promised in *Loeb* series.

INDEX

- Achilleis*, argument of the 27
 Afer, Cn. Domitius 129
Agricola, the 165, 166
 Agriculture, works on 283 *sqq.*
 Agrippina 161
 Albinouanus Peto 18
 Annaeus: *see* Lucanus, Seneca
Annales 165
Annals, the 165, 168 *sqq.*
 Antimachus and Statius 51
 Aper, M. 131
Apocolocyntosis: *see* *Apotheosis*
 Apollonius and Valerius Flaccus,
 comparison of 43 *sqq.*, 47
Apophoreta 101
 Apostrophe in Epic 32
Apotheosis Divi Claudii 217 *sqq.*;
 its author 219; its relationship to
 the *Apocolocyntosis* 220
 Aqueducts, work on the 313
 Aquilius Regulus, M. 132
Aquis, the *De* 313
 Aratus and Germanicus 97
 Archaizing tendency 189
Argonautica, argument of the 20 *sqq.*
 Arulenus Rusticus 161
 Asconius Pedianus, Q. 254
Atellana 55
 Aufidius Bassus 150
 'Augustan age of literature,' the
 term 1
 Authorities by the ancients, the
 quotation of 148, 153, 303, 304

Bees, *The Poor Man's* 14
Beneficiis, the *De* 198
 Biography 160 *sqq.*; of Lucan 18²;
 of Persius 66, 255; of Juvenal
 74; of the elder Pliny 300¹

 CAESIUS BASSUS 66, 96
 Calendars, ancient 285
 Calpurnius Siculus, T. 90 *sqq.*
- Celsus, A. Cornelius 277; his
 medical work 277 *sqq.*; on
 agriculture 283; on philosophy
 195; on rhetoric 265
Cepus 305
 Character-drawing 227
 Classicism, early form of 17
 Claudius, the emperor: his histories
 151; his autobiography 160;
 speech of his in the senate 176
Clementia, the *De* 198
 Cluvius Rufus 158
 Colloquial Latin 67, 88, 202, 218,
 228, 286, 306
Colores 257
 Columella, L. Junius Moderatus
 283 *sqq.*; his imitation and use
 of Virgil 288
 Comedy 55
 Commerce and industry 309
Contes in Phaedrus 86 *sqq.*
Controuersia 257
 Corbulo, Cn. Domitius 161
 Cornutus, L. Annaeus 66, 72, 195
 Country-life, taste for 113 *sqq.*
 Cremutius Cordus, A. 138
 Crispus, Q. Vibius 130
 Criticism, literary 227, 255 *sqq.*, 273
 Curiatius Maternus 56
 Curtius Rufus, Q. 152 *sqq.*
- DECLAMATIONS, the 6 *sqq.*, 222,
 257 *sqq.*, 262, 274; their influence
 upon literature 12 *sqq.*, 154;
 collections ascribed to Quintilian
 275
Delatores 128
Dialogi, Seneca's 199
Dialogus ascribed to Tacitus, the
 261 *sqq.*; date of its composition
 164, 260; dramatic date of the
 work 260; its style 260; its
 educational standpoint 263

Diatribes, Cynic 66, 154, 197, 199, 296

Dilettantism 2, 3, 245

Diuisiones 257

Domitius Afer, Cn. 129

Drama, the 55 *sqq.*

ECLOGUE, the 90 *sqq.*

Education, Roman 5 *sqq.*, 222, 263, 267 *sqq.*

Einsiedeln poems 94

Elegy, the 96

Eloquence in Seneca 205 *sqq.*

Emperors, oratorical powers of the 128

Encyclopaedia of Celsus (?) 277; of the elder Pliny 300

Epic, the 18 *sqq.*

Epic poets, points common to the Silver 29 *sqq.*

Epicurus, Seneca's view of 210

Epigram, the 99 *sqq.*

Epigrammatic sayings, maxims, etc.: in Juvenal 82; in Seneca 202; in Tacitus 185 *sqq.*; in Velleius 142

Episodes, overgrown 30, 31

Epistulae Morales, Seneca's 198

Euripides and Seneca 57; and Statius 51

Exaggeration 30, 81, 291

FABLE, the 85

Fenestella 252

Frigus 5

Frontinus, S. Julius 311 *sqq.*

GAETULICUS, CN. LENTULUS 103^a

Galerius Trachalus, P. 131

Geography, works on 289 *sqq.*

Germania, the 165, 295 *sqq.*

Germanicus, epigrams ascribed to 99; a translation of Aratus probably his 97

Germany and Rome 295

Gesta Romanorum 7

Grammar, works on 252 *sqq.*

Grammaticae 252

Hercules Oetaeus, the 58

Herennius Senecio 161

Hexameter of Statius, the 52, 120

Historia of Pliny, the *Naturalis* 301 *sqq.*

Historiae of Tacitus, the 165, 168

History 137 *sqq.*; a dangerous subject under the Empire 137; speeches introduced in 175; literary history in Velleius 144 *sqq.*

Homer imitated by epic poets 38; translated anonymously 97

Horace imitated by Persius 69, 70^a

IAMBIC of Phaedrus, the 89

Idyll, the 90 *sqq.*

Ilias Latina, the 97 *sqq.*

Illustrations in Seneca 204

Imitation: a stylistic convention 39, 260; of Cicero 260; of Homer 38; of Sallust 291; of Virgil 38 *sqq.*

Institutio Oratoria, the 267 *sqq.*

Iulius Secundus 131

Iuuenalis, D. Iunius 74 *sqq.*; defects of his satire 81; forcefulness of his observations 82; his descriptive powers 83

Laus Pisonis, the 94

Learning in the Epics 32, 35, 36; in Juvenal 81

Letters of Pliny the younger 239 *sqq.*; of Seneca 198; of Trajan 248 *sqq.*; poetical 119

Literary criticism: see Criticism

— history in Velleius 144 *sqq.*

Love poetry 96

Lucanus, M. Annaeus 18; his poems 19; his *Pharsalia* 19, 29 *sqq.*, 41 *sqq.*; his *Saturnalia* 95

Lucilius and Persius 66, 69

Lupus, P. Rutilius 265

Lyrical poetry 95

MAMERCUS AEMILIUS SCAURUS 129

Manuals of Frontinus 311

- Martialis, M. Valerius 100 *sqq.* ; his epigrams 103 *sqq.* ; his character 110 *sqq.* ; not without tenderness 112 ; a lover of the country 113 *sqq.*
- Medicine, works on 277 *sqq.*
- Mela, Pomponius 289 *sqq.*
- Memoirs 160
- Menippean satire 65, 217, 233 *sqq.*
- Messalla : *see* Vipstanus
- Metaphors : in Persius 68 ; in Seneca 204 ; in Tacitus 188
- Military science, works on 311
- Mime, the 55
- Mock-heroic verse 235
- Moralizing in the epics 32 ; in the elder Pliny 308
- Mucianus, C. Licinius 293
- Mythological allusions and illustrations 124 ; similes 35
- NATURAL History in the epic poets 36, 53 ; Pliny's 301 *sqq.*
- Naturales Quaestiones*, the 198
- Nature, interest in 114, 247
- Nonianus, M. Seruilius 157
- 'Novel,' ancient equivalents for the term 233
- Octavia*, the 61
- Oratory 128 *sqq.*
- Ovid and the declamations 13 ; the model of the Silver epic poets 29 ; in Seneca 205
- PALAEMON, Q. REMMIUS 253
- Panegyric of Piso*, the 94
- Panegyricus*, Pliny's 133 *sqq.*
- Papinius : *see* Statius
- Part, the whole subordinated to the 5, 15, 30, 35, 81, 144
- Passennus Paullus, C. 96
- Paterculus : *see* Velleius
- Pedo, Albinouanus 18
- Persius Flaccus, A. 66 ; his obscurity 67 *sqq.* ; his bookishness 69
- Petronius Arbiter probably the Petronius of Tacitus 221 ; his novel 221 *sqq.* ; his literary criticism 227 ; versatility of his style and strength of his characterization 227 *sqq.* ; his *Banquet of Trimalchio* 227 ; his novel a Menippean satire 233 *sqq.* ; epigrams attributed to him 99
- Phaedrus 85 *sqq.* ; *contes* included among his fables 86 *sqq.*
- Phaenomena* of Aratus, translation of the 97
- Pharsalia*, argument of the 19
- 'Pindar (Theban)' 99
- Philosophy 195 *sqq.*
- Plinius Secundus, C. (*the elder Pliny*) 300 ; his *Naturalis Historia* 301 *sqq.* ; its discursiveness 302 ; its uncritical character 304 ; its Latinity 306 ; its purple patches 306 *sqq.* ; its geographical books 293 ; value of its contents 308 ; Pliny's biography of Pomponius Secundus 161 ; his grammatical work 254 ; his historical works 159, 160 ; his rhetorical work 265
- Plinius Caecilius Secundus, C. (*the younger Pliny*) 238 ; his letters 239 *sqq.* ; his interest in literature 245 *sqq.* ; his sympathy with Nature 247 ; his reflections 248 ; his correspondence with Trajan 248 *sqq.* ; his elegiacs 96 ; his epigrams 99 ; his speeches 133 ; his *Panegyricus* 133 *sqq.*
- Poetry, true 43 *sqq.*, 49 *sqq.*, 59 *sqq.*, 125, 126
- Poetry and prose confused, styles of 14
- Point 12, 29, 30, 142, 187, 188, 203, 204 ; the taste for it natural to Roman temperament 15 *sqq.*
- Political use made of the writings of Tacitus 193 *sqq.*
- Pomponius Secundus, P. 56
- Praetexta* 56 ; its composition dangerous under the Emperors 56
- Prefaces to poetical works 56, 118
- Probus, M. Valerius 254
- Proportion, loss of the sense of : *see* Part
- Prose : *see* Poetry
- Punica*, argument of the 28

322 SILVER AGE OF LATIN LITERATURE

- QUINTILIANUS, M. FABIVS** 266; his work on rhetoric 267 *sqq.*; not a mere teacher of rhetoric 273; declamations ascribed to 275
- RANT** in Seneca's plays 59
Realism in the mime 55; in Petronius 227 *sqq.*
Recitations, the 3 *sqq.* 152, 246, 247
Regulus, M. Aquilius 132
Repetition of a thought in a different form 13, 14
Rhetoric of Silver Latin 12; writers on 265 *sqq.*; its influence on Statius' *Silvae* 119
Romance in the declamations 7: *see also* Novel
Rusticus, Fabius 158
Rutilius Lupus, P. 265
- SALEIVS BASSVS** 54⁷
Sallust and the pointed style 17; imitated by Mela 291; by Tacitus 189
Satire, Republican and Augustan 64, 65; in verse 66 *sqq.*; in prose 217 *sqq.*, 233 *sqq.*; in Seneca's philosophical works 209
Satura, meaning of the word 64
Scribonius Largus 282
Seneca, L. Annaeus (the elder Seneca) 255; his work on the declamations 6, 256 *sqq.*; his history 150
Seneca, L. Annaeus (the younger Seneca) 195; his biographical work 213; epigrams ascribed to 99; his geographical works 293; his philosophical programme 197; and works 198; their main objective morals 200; their style and language 202 *sqq.*; their eloquence 205 *sqq.*; philosophical standpoint of Seneca 207 *sqq.*; his laxity 211; and want of system 212; influence of his prose writings 213 *sqq.*; his speeches 130; his tragedies 57 *sqq.*; their influence 62 *sqq.*
Senecan drama 57 *sqq.*
Sentimentality 50, 308
- Serranus** 54⁷
Seruilius Nonianus, M. 157
Silius Italicus, T. 27; his *Punica* 28, 30 *sqq.*, 53; ascription to him of the *Ilias Latina* 98
Silua, meaning of the word 118
Silvae of Lucan 19; of Statius 117 *sqq.*
Similes in Epic 34 *sqq.*; in Valerius Flaccus 47
Spectaculorum, Liber 101
Speeches in Tacitus and other ancient historians 175
Statius, P. Papinius 23; his epics 24 *sqq.*, 27, 30 *sqq.*, 49 *sqq.*; his beauties 49 *sqq.*; his models in the *Thebais* 51; his *Silvae* 117 *sqq.*; how far a new genre 119; impromptu character imparted to them 122; his hexameter 52, 120
Stella, L. Arruntius 96
Stoicism of Seneca 208
Strategemata, the 311
Studiosus, the 265
Style, ancient rules of 39, 175
Suasoria 257
Suetonius Paulinus, C. 161
Sulpicia 96
Supernatural in the Epic, use of the 33
- TACITVS, P. CORNELIVS** 162; his historical and biographical works 164 *sqq.*; conception of History 169; impartiality 170; political standpoint 171; use of authorities 173; attitude in the matter of speeches 175; T. *le plus grand peintre de l'antiquité* 178 *sqq.*; his observations 185 *sqq.*; language and style 189 *sqq.*; influence 191 *sqq.*; his oratory 132; *see Dialogus, Germania*
Taste, bad: in the epics 30, 37; in Senecan drama 59; in Statius' *Silvae* 124
Tenderness in Martial 112, 113; in Statius 50, 51, 125, 126
Texts of Authors, History of the: 42, 48, 53, 54, 73, 74, 83, 84, 85, 94, 96⁷, 99, 102¹, 116, 122, 136,

- 147, 149, 160, 192, 193, 236, 248, 259, 262, 275, 283, 300, 310, 312
Thebais, argument of the 24; its models 51
 Theocritus and Calpurnius 91, 92
 Tiberius' autobiography 160
 Trachalus: *see* Galerius
 Tragedy 55 *sqq.*
 Trajan's *Dacica* 162; correspondence with Pliny the Younger 248 *sqq.*
 Translation from the Greek, Roman theories as to 38
 Translations 97 *sqq.*
Trimalchio, the *Banquet of* 227 *sqq.*
Troades, scene from Seneca's 59 *sqq.*
 Turnus 74
- Urbanitas* 235
 Utopian tendency 296
- VALERIUS FLACCUS, C. 20; his *Argonautica* 20 *sqq.*, 29 *sqq.*, 43 *sqq.*; comparison of him with Apollonius 43 *sqq.*; his treatment of love 44; his imaginativeness 46; his constructive skill 47
 Valerius Maximus 147 *sqq.*
 Velleius Paterculus, C. 139 *sqq.*; his excursions 144 *sqq.*
 Verginius Rufus, L. 133, 158, 238⁴, 241
 Vespasian's memoirs 161
 Vestricius Spurinna 96
 Vibius Crispus, Q. 130
Vilica 286
 Vipstanus Messalla, memoirs of 161; his speeches 131
 Virgil imitated by Calpurnius 91; by Columella 288; by the epic poets 38 *sqq.*; used by the declaimers 14; by Petronius 235; by Seneca 205, 235
- WHOLE subordinated to the part, the 5, 15, 30, 35, 81, 144
 Words strained in Tacitus 188, 191
 Wounds in Epic 36
- Xenia* 101

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